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ACE MORALITY
by BERNARD SHAW

THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

STUBBORN fighting continues in Spain, and the issue is still uncertain, though the chances of the Government look better as we write. Madrid appears to be in no immediate danger; the advance of the rebel columns from the north has been checked, and the Moroccan troops in Andalusia are a very long way from the capital. All the ports, except Cadiz and Algeciras, are in Government hands. The rebels' principal strongholds in Spain itself are Saragossa, Oviedo and Seville, but they are more or less isolated in all those centres. Their main strength is in Morocco, but they are hampered there by the navy which has remained loyal. Little reliance can be placed on foreign correspondents' accounts of battles, casualties, church burnings, and the rest. No one doubts that there is slaughter and destruction on a large scale; but how can anybody possibly know that the total number of killed and wounded at the beginning of this week was 19,000, the figure given us by one newspaper—and improved by another to 30,000?

Spain and the Tory Press

More sinister is the daily magnification of atrocities by the Rothermere press. Most of the tales of horror picked up from refugees are the familiar stuff; they did service against Germany during the war, against Russia after it, and now they are used against Spanish Socialists. No doubt they satisfy Colonel Blimp; but they will carry no weight with thoughtful people. More significant is the attitude of the *Times* and other of the more reputable Conservative papers. This is after all an army revolt against a properly constituted democratic regime, and the National Council of Labour in Great Britain and the International Federation of Trade Unions have quite properly issued an appeal for support of the Spanish Government. But the *Times* has now dropped the disreputable term "rebels," and substituted "anti-Government forces," and its leading article last Wednesday contained an astonishing collection of statements, the most remarkable suggestion being that Soviet agents fomented the trouble, and that "prominent Russian Communists foretold so long ago as the spring that Spain would be in a state of chaos by a date in July." Are we to infer that the Bolsheviks deliberately engineered General Franco's "war of liberation from Marxism?"

More Sealed Lips

Mr. Eden is a faithful disciple of the Prime Minister. In the foreign affairs debate on Monday he was prolific in pious sentiments; but so far as any definite policy was concerned his lips were firmly sealed. As regards the Locarno Conference he thinks "we have now reached a stage when a real spirit of collaboration exists" and hopes—as of course everyone does—that we shall be able to surmount obstacles. The Italian obstacle, indeed, is

already in process of being surmounted; Mussolini has got the substance of what he wanted, and it looks as if he will soon get the shadow as well. Mr. Eden announced the withdrawal of the special arrangements in the Mediterranean, which he is doubtless right in saying are no longer necessary. But the "real spirit of collaboration"—for peace—is not yet conspicuous either in Italy or in Germany. On more specific questions such as colonies and mandates, Mr. Eden spoke vaguely of "grave difficulties" for which the Government have found no solution. On the reform of the League they are equally non-committal; Mr. Eden would say no more than that they were not in favour either of a Covenant shorn of all its coercive provisions or of universal and automatic action against the aggressor. That is interesting; but it does not tell us what everybody, at home and abroad, wants to know —what the Government *are* in favour of.

The Five-Power Conference

It is generally expected that Italy and Germany will accept the invitation to the Five-Power Conference, though at the moment both are taking a very cautious attitude. The suggestion in Rome that Italy needs more time for reflection sounds rather absurd; we suspect indeed that it is a piece of that play-acting of which the Duce is so fond. As things are to-day, he has nothing to gain and a good deal to lose by sulking or standing on punctilio. Germany's position is rather different, but she too, it is thought, will say "yes," though "with reservations." What the reservations are to be is not clear. It may be that Hitler will bar any talk about the eastern frontiers. He has still left unanswered the questionnaire put to him a considerable time ago by the British Government, and we are told that the German view is that the invitation to the Conference makes any answer unnecessary. Maybe; but some of the questions are vital, and until Germany is prepared to give definite pledges against aggression in the East, it is idle to hope for a settlement of Europe. Sir Austen Chamberlain, in the debate on Monday, said some hard things about Nazi policy. Mr. Lloyd George called them "pernicious and provocative." But they were substantially true.

The Second Stage in France

M. Blum's Government is now reaching the second stage of its difficulties—the financial. The Finance Minister, M. Vincent-Auriol, has promised this week that his forthcoming budget will be unbalanced but honest; and his statements concerning the State's financial position have been so far remarkably frank. There is some doubt about the response which has been made to the bond issue by means of which immediate needs are as far as possible to be made. No figures have yet been published; but it is rumoured that the richer subscribers have been holding aloof. If the response is poor, the Government will be driven to finance its commitments to a greater extent than it desires through advances from the Bank of France, which it is now in a position to control. That will, however, almost certainly bring devaluation nearer; and it is said that a good many of the opponents of devaluation in the ranks of the Front Populaire—including at any rate some of the Communists—are weakening in their hostility to this obvious resource. Meanwhile the small traders and employers, many of whom belong to the Radical Party, are getting restive, and demanding that the Government shall do something for them parallel to what it has done for the workers in terms of wages and hours. The Government has promised special measures for the provision of cheap credits and other forms of help; but these are not yet through Parliament. Altogether, M. Blum and his Finance Minister have difficult times ahead of them, unless they can persuade the C.G.T. and the Communists that some sort of moderate devaluation is a necessary part of the expansionist policy to which the Front Populaire is committed.

Sport and Politics

Nazi hospitality during the past few weeks has shown some queer contrasts. In Berlin, workmen are busy making preparations for the visit of Lord Burghley and his friends to the Olympic Games. The streets are being given a fresh coat of paint and polish, and Dr. Goebbels has generously agreed to remove any of the outward signs of persecution which might be thought to mar the gaiety of the occasion. In Hamburg, Edgar André, late Communist leader of the Seamen's and Firemen's Union, has been sentenced to death. In 1932 he was arrested and thrown into a Hamburg gaol without charge or trial. For three years his Nazi keepers have vainly attempted to convert him by their own peculiar methods to the National-Socialist faith, and now, having failed to screw from him the names of his associates, they have had him tried and convicted on a trumped-up charge of "moral complicity" in the crimes of murder and treason. According to all accounts, Thaelmann is soon to meet the same fate as André; perhaps, however, the approach of the Olympic Games may necessitate a further postponement of that long-awaited Nazi triumph. Yet it surely does not require any stretch of the imagination to realise that the flags in the Berlin streets and the appliances in the Hamburg prison are all part and parcel of the same system. Terrorism for the few and megaphone propaganda for the many provide the essentials in this new technique of government. Any day now the news may leak through that André has been done away with in the same secret manner in which he was tried.

Poverty and Malnutrition

It did not take the House of Lords long on Monday to approve the draft unemployment assistance regulations. There were, of course, no new arguments on either side. Lord Marley, while admitting that in many points the regulations had been improved, complained that the scales were still too low. This is a vice which, in the agitation against the means test, tends to be forgotten. The Children's Minimum Council calls attention once again to the inadequacy of the amount available for the nurture of multitudes of children of the unemployed. You cannot feed a child properly on 3*s*. a week; the British Medical Association, Sir John Orr and the rest of the experts, whatever may be their differences on minor points, are agreed on this. Their main conclusions are now reinforced by the Interim Report, published the other day, of the League of Nations Mixed Committee on the Problem of Nutrition (*Allen and Unwin*, 2*s*.). This Committee, presided over by Lord Astor, insists on the insufficiency of the diet of masses of the workers, in this country and in others, employed as well as unemployed. "And the greatest

single cause of defective nutrition in any community is poverty and the ignorance which is often associated with poverty." The poverty in our own community cannot be abolished in a day. But its worst mischiefs could be remedied if the National Government really cared about the condition of the Nation.

Wanted.—A New Factory Act

More accidents in industry and longer hours of work—these are some of the less satisfactory accompaniments of industrial recovery described in the latest Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories. Compared with 1933, total accidents last year increased by 32 per cent. and fatal accidents by 22 per cent. Equally serious, and more easily preventable, is the attempt of some employers to speed-up production by imposing heavier demands on their workpeople. In most factories a week of 47 or 48 hours is now regarded as normal; yet reports from all parts of the country reveal that in many trades—for example, in the light metal trades, the less efficient industries in the Midlands and large electrical engineering works in the Eastern Counties—a working week of 55 to 57½ hours is still the rule rather than the exception. These long hours, moreover, are usually most common among those sections of the population upon which the effect is likely to be most damaging. Sometimes, in the same works, men in an organised trade will be working 48 hours, whilst women and young persons are compelled to work to the legal limit. The Report, therefore, gives further proof of the urgent need of a new Factory Act for young persons. The present legal limit was fixed 35 years ago, and since that date the introduction of more efficient machinery has increased the strain of factory work.

Road Safety for Children

The London County Council has launched a campaign for securing additional precautions against road accidents to school children in the metropolitan area. In certain parts of inner London these accidents have risen alarmingly of late. Holborn, the most perilous area, has a record of over twelve accidents last year for every thousand children, and Westminster and Finsbury are not far behind. The accidents include a large number to child cyclists; and it is urged that all cyclists of school age should carry on their cycles a special badge—perhaps the familiar "L"—in order to induce motorists to take greater care. This, however, constitutes only a small part of the problem. Another, which is seldom stressed, is the hardship inflicted on mothers in London and other towns who, not daring to send their children to school unattended, are being compelled to take and fetch them to and from school, though they are already overburdened with domestic duties. Another aspect of the matter is, of course, that the streets, traditionally the playgrounds of the poorer children, are becoming more and more unsafe, and that the children have in most cases nowhere else to play. It is impossible to check the growth of traffic on the roads; but the provision of far more playground space, and the closing of more streets to general motor-traffic, are major issues demanding prompt attention from the Government and the local authorities alike.

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TRENCHES ACROSS EUROPE

THE civil war in Spain will certainly grave its impress deep upon the history of the Peninsula; nor can it fail to affect the political balance of Europe. It can end only by a sharp decision. Had it followed some negotiation that failed in the last hour; had it been fought with mercy and mutual respect, then perhaps it might have ended in a compromise. But these are rebels who never thought of negotiating: they struck in the dark and gave no quarter: they must fight till their faction is prostrate or triumphant. The Spain that comes out of this struggle will be soft clay in the victors' hands. If we dare to hope for the Republic's triumph, it is not because the news rather doubtfully points this way, but rather because the mass of the working population has rallied to it with dauntless courage. Slight though our information is, nothing in it suggests that the rebellion has any mass support. It began as a conspiracy of professional soldiers; it could count from the start on the zeal of the clergy and the monastic orders; it rallied some organised groups of aristocratic youths, who call themselves Fascists. But it had never learned to babble the jargon of pseudo-Socialism, and therefore it has no visible following in the lower-middle and working classes. If it should succeed, it is more likely to consecrate a King than a Führer; the Church will serve it for party, and it will rely not on plebiscites but on martial law. None the less, though it is an older and darker growth than Fascism, it has the sympathy of both the Fascist dictatorships, and by their side, if it should win, it would range a fettered Spain.

The contrary event is at once the more probable and the more intriguing. For the Republic that wins by the courage and devotion of its workers can live no longer by the precepts of middle-class Liberalism. Its thinking must move as the forces that sustain it shift. The first consequence of the military rebellion must clearly be a reorganisation of the armed formations, and the New Model can hardly fail to be a Red Army. This Republic cannot trust itself again to a professedly neutral soldiery; it must create a political army, officered by the rankers who have proved their capacity and their loyalty. With such a prop to lean on, can ministries fail to move to the Left? But in such a situation ministries do not so much rule as reflect the will of the active part of the population—the juntas or soviets of delegates chosen mainly from the Trade Unions, who in these days of confusion replaced the shattered administrative machine, and each in its own parish or city policed the streets, controlled industry, and raised battalions of young workers for the defence of an idea. That idea was not Constitutional Liberalism, it was Socialism. This Republic may not break abruptly with its past; it may still honour the Liberals who have served it faithfully; it may continue the tactics of the People's Front; but with whatever delays and qualifications it is headed towards Socialism. That places it in Europe. Its friends and its only friends are the democracies. Wherever there is a People's Front, wherever there are workers' parties, there its success will be hailed as a family victory.

It is such events as this, with their quality of a lightning flash at night, that reveal the European landscape. Across

it in the sudden glare one sees the trench-lines drawn, that had divided us unperceived. They mean war, though no herald has declared it. The democracies face the dictatorships—it is a war of ideas. The workers face the owners—it is a war of classes. Call it what you will, the two recognise each other for enemies. Rome and Berlin are on one side of the lines, Paris and Moscow on the other. The Fascists affect no concealment, and from the information that reaches us, we are compelled to believe, with others who should know, that both these Powers have supported General Franco with money. Openly this week over the air one of them has backed him with menaces—a plain threat of armed intervention should France render the customary services to a friendly neighbour. What is the motive of this avowed and active partisanship? Fascism is not a doctrine of fraternity. For it the absolute good is national aggrandisement. But the spread of Fascism adds to the prestige of its protagonists. Moreover, both Rome and Berlin have learned that they have in those who man the opposite trench a common enemy. That knowledge has driven them since the Abyssinian affair into a rapprochement, which may be more solid and durable than their opponents at first supposed. They reckon that a Fascist Spain would face the same enemies; she would meet from Liberals and Socialists at every turn the same instinctive hostility; she would be driven, therefore, into their camp. Indeed, Spanish Fascism was their ally and their pensioner before a shot was fired. They have, however, another reason. It is based on the topography of these trenches. A Fascist Spain would occupy both shores of the Straits of Gibraltar; she would control several islands of strategic value both in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean; she could compel the French to divert appreciable forces to hold the line of the Pyrenees. In short, if this war of ideas or of classes invades the middle seas, she would hold key positions. To-day she receives; to-morrow, if she lives, she can bestow.

The Fascist Powers need no flash of summer lightning to perceive these trenches. They saw them steadily and in the dark. More promptly and with clearer foresight than their opponents, they recognised the nature of this trench-warfare. Classes and nations are born on one side of these trenches or the other. The soldiers in this campaign inherit their uniforms. They put on the epaulettes or the rags with the first impressions that they draw from the palace or cottage that serves them as messroom or dug-out. They learn from their mothers in their cradles the words of command to which their adult limbs will march. Heredity and history are for them the recruiting sergeants. It is only the diplomatists and the politicians, poised above this battle, who suppose that nations can be enlisted for these trenches by barter and intrigue. The battalions stand formed—the French and the Russians on one side, the Italians and Germans on the other. No subtlety at Stresa or in the coming Locarno Conference will alter this alignment. But one enigma persists. This country of ours straddles the trenches, and fails to recognise the nature of the struggle that has begun.

The official attitude is professedly one of neutrality in the Spanish struggle. That is already to distort the relationship that one Government owes in such an emergency to another which it has recognised. We accept without question Mr. Eden's denial of positively unfriendly conduct. He has not refused to license the sale of arms to this friendly Government in its hour of need, as his predecessor did in the case of Abyssinia. This he has not done for the good reason that no licences have been sought. He allowed the sale of the Government's own oil for Italy's bombing planes, that they might scatter poison in defiance of the League he served. He assures us that he has not banned the sale of oil to Spanish warships. None the less, we cannot doubt that the British authorities in Gibraltar did refuse the Spanish Consul-General's request that they should permit the sale of oil and food to these ships. But these ambiguities of conduct concern us chiefly as indications that this country refuses as yet to see the place which its history and its institutions assign to it. It is a democracy. It belongs to the People's Front that forms on one side of these trenches. The decorum of the Foreign Office and the timidity of elder statesmen may keep it neutral for a time. But the weight of mass opinion should suffice one day to place it in the ranks with France and Russia. It is painful that it should hesitate over Spain, but Russia's claims, though they may be less urgent, will furnish the decisive test. Nothing that Mr. Eden had to say on Monday dissipated the suspicion that his Government proposes to guarantee France against a German attack, while refusing this assurance to Russia. In this struggle of ideas or of classes that is already declared geography is an irrelevance. It is not parallels of longitude that divide the combatants; it is their class structure and their response to certain ideas. Those who answer to the call of race are in one camp, those who love humanity in the other. While we hesitate, we compromise the chances not only of effective resistance, but of hopeful negotiation. Concession, however just, is difficult to-day, because it provokes the reflection: "If we yield this and that, will not an aggrandised Germany then fall with redoubled force on Russia?" The way of safety is first to form our People's Front. It must include with ourselves both Russia and France, and the democratic Spain that will, we hope, emerge the stronger from this civil war. It must be pledged to mutual defence. Then, but not till then, it might negotiate with safety. This step we shall take when we, in the revealing light of crisis, perceive the trenches that are already dug.

SOVIET DEMOCRACY

THE new Soviet Constitution is a remarkable and important document. Some people suspect it. "Yes," they say, "the new democracy looks very fine on paper. But how will it be carried out?" This is a natural reaction. If the new constitution had suddenly sprung from the mind of a wise lawgiver or from the hands of a clever legal commission, I, too, would be sceptical. Actually, however, the constitution is the fruit of an organic growth which commenced in 1917, and more particularly in 1929. Moreover, it is not merely a promise. Many of its provisions register changes which have already taken place.

For instance, the constitution guarantees paid employment, leisure and free education to all the inhabitants of the country. This describes an existing condition. There is no unemployment in the U.S.S.R.; indeed, there is a scarcity of labour. The circumstance that the Bolsheviks wrote universal employment into the basic law of their State suggests that, in their opinion, the present situation on the labour market is not a

passing phase, but an unalterable characteristic of Socialist economy. Similarly, the guarantee of leisure reflects Soviet arrangements which are not new. A fortnight's vacation with pay for all workers is the legal minimum, and it is often exceeded. The seven-hour day is becoming the rule in Russia; the authorities hope some day to achieve further reductions. Compulsory education has been adopted by other nations. The Soviet Union is no exception in this matter. But in no other country do so many adults go to school. I know factories in which 60 to 90 per cent. of the force attend free courses. Any Soviet man, woman or child who wants an education can already get it for the asking. In respect to employment, leisure and education, therefore, the constitution merely clothes a fact with the mantle of inalienable right. Citizens in a Socialist State not only have, they can demand labour with compensation, cultured rest, and learning.

This is the third Soviet constitution. The first was adopted on July 10th, 1918, the second on January 31st, 1924. Lenin wrote in 1909, that a constitution "expresses the real alignment of forces in the class struggle." This alignment has changed so much since the revolution, that the first two constitutions quickly outlived themselves. The second constitution granted no rights to citizens. It did not even mention those rights which they already had. Its chief concern was the enunciation of the powers of the State. The reasons are clear: the destructive civil war was of recent memory. The dictatorship was fierce and arbitrary, for the domestic enemy had not been extirpated. The Government was Socialist in name, but Socialist economy counted more problems than achievements, and capitalism displayed resistance and strength. Half the trade, one-fifth of the industry and all of agriculture were in private hands. How could the State guarantee labour to all in these circumstances? It was not master in its own house. It had to continue the class war, and the basic law of the land, accordingly, could not be individual right; it was official might.

Using the prerogatives which the revolution gave and the constitution of 1924 confirmed, the dictatorship proceeded to crush capitalism and build Socialism. After twelve years of costly struggle and unprecedented sacrifices, Russian capitalism is dead and Soviet Socialism has acquired colossal power. There is now no capitalist industry in the U.S.S.R., and private commerce and farming have shrunk to negligible dimensions. A new alignment of social forces resulted.

This "victory of Socialism," says the fortnightly *Bolshevik* organ of the Communist Party, "permits us to undertake the normalisation and ordering of all our legislative work and to strengthen our judicial system. . . . Soviet law must be precise, intelligible to the masses, and stable. The most important element in the stability of Soviet legislation is the new constitution." The constitution is thus rooted in successful agrarian collectivisation, in advancing industrialisation, in mounting individual productivity. On this new basis, in Bolshevik opinion, new human rights are possible. Until 1929, there were exploiting classes in Russia. "Now that they are liquidated," says the *Bolshevik*, "now that, according to Stalin, 'our society consists solely of the free toilers of city and village—the workers, peasants and intellectuals,' the former limitations on Soviet democracy are no longer necessary."

It is logical, consequently, that the bill of rights as set forth in Chapter X of the new Soviet constitution, begins with the rights made possible by the growth and enrichment of Socialist economy—paid labour, leisure and free schooling—and then proceeds with the civil rights which were denied while the dictatorship encountered the opposition of hostile capitalist classes. These, first, are: "Freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and meetings, freedom of street processions and demonstrations." The present "alignment of forces in the class struggle" would easily warrant the Bolsheviks in immediately investing this new right with concrete content. That is why it is in the constitution. But the past has adduced no evidence that anti-Communists or even Communists and pro-Communists who are excessively critical of the central authorities will soon obtain any liberty of expression on political problems. A writer friend of mine is playing with the idea of publishing a Moscow journal of "independent opinion," and the constitution has encouraged him. In the field of literature, there has been slightly more tolerance. Even a dynamic revolutionary regime, however, is subject to inertia, and Russia has no democratic tradition. It will probably be some time before the Soviet Government dispenses with the steam-roller in politics. Repression is no longer necessary or desirable, but it remains a convenience. In regard to freedom of speech, etc., therefore, I shall wait and see.

But the constitution grants other civil liberties of even more direct importance than free expression. Article 127 affirms that "citizens of the U.S.S.R. are ensured the inviolability of person. No one may be subjected to arrest except upon the decision of a court or with the sanction of the prosecuting attorney's office." And (Article 128) "the inviolability of the homes of citizens and the secrey of correspondence are protected by law."

The constitution of 1924 did not promise these elementary rights because conditions would have made the promise impracticable. The dictatorship, operating usually through the G.P.U., exercised unlimited powers. Neither human beings, nor apartments, nor letters were safe from its arbitrary acts. The G.P.U. was the "sharp sword of the revolution." The test of the reality of Articles 127 and 128 is the curbing of the G.P.U. Has it been curbed?

The slow eclipse of the G.P.U. commenced in 1931 when its excessive zeal turned legitimate suspicion of some engineers and technicians into an unfair crusade against vast numbers of intellectuals. In his Six Point speech of June 23rd, 1931, Stalin called a halt to this unfair discrimination, and about the same time, Akulov displaced Yagoda as actual chief of the G.P.U. Akulov was more tolerant and "liberal-minded." A certain amount of relaxation resulted, but the struggle over collectivisation was still fierce. The iron hand could not yet be dispensed with. The G.P.U. machine refused to co-operate with Akulov, and he was shelved. This attempt to harness the G.P.U. had failed. But in the spring of 1933, Stalin appointed Akulov to the newly created office of chief prosecuting attorney with authority to "supervise the legality and regularity of the G.P.U.'s acts." Akulov commenced to release large numbers of prisoners and to check arbitrary procedures. In January, 1934, the Government decided to reorganise the G.P.U., restrict its authority, and rename it the Commissariat for Internal Affairs. This constituted a severe blow to the prestige and power of the G.P.U. But something worse was in store. On December 1st, 1934, Sergei Kirov, the beloved Leningrad Bolshevik leader, was assassinated. Part of the blame fell on the reconstructed Internal Commissariat. It was charged with insufficient vigilance. Some of its high officials were immediately arrested. (They are now working as prisoners on the Moscow-Volga canal.) Shortly thereafter, the Internal Commissariat was shorn of the right to arrest certain categories of people—engineers and military men, for instance—without the permission of the prosecuting attorney's office. This was an unheard-of limitation, but it indicated that ruthlessness and terror had ceased to be the State's most trusted weapons. The new constitution continues this line of development. By its terms, the prosecuting attorney becomes the most powerful official in the Soviet Government. He is selected by the Supreme Council or Parliament of the country for a period of seven years, whereas all other members of the Government hold office for only four years. In him is "vested the highest supervision of the exact observance of the law by all People's Commissariats and the institutions under them, as well as by individual officials and citizens of the U.S.S.R." In other words, he is superior to the Internal Commissariat. Moreover (Article 117), "the representatives of the prosecuting attorney's office perform their functions independently of any local organs whatsoever, being responsible alone to the Chief Prosecutor of the

U.S.S.R." The prosecutor's paramount task will be the protection of individual rights and personal inviolability. He is clothed with the power to do this. The Internal Commissariat must come to him or go to the courts for a warrant to arrest anyone or to search a residence. He can veto any move of the Internal Commissariat. If these regulations had appeared in 1930 or 1931, few would have accepted them as realistic. But the rise of the authority of the prosecutor and the weakening of the G.P.U. has already created exactly the relationship between these two offices which is formulated, made permanent and taken a long step further by the new constitution. The reign of law is now definitely established in the U.S.S.R. There is little doubt, accordingly, that if the present normal times continue—in other words—if there is no foreign war—Soviet citizens will hereafter really enjoy inviolability of person, home and mail. They have the courts too, for redress of grievances. The constitution lends the Soviet judiciary a new importance and independence. In a recent article in the *Bolshevik* entitled " The Soviet Court and Soviet Democracy," A. Vishinsky, the chief prosecutor of the U.S.S.R., stated that the first principles of Soviet court procedure must be public hearings, freedom of discussion, a guarantee of the rights of the accused, equality of all parties in the dispute (even if the State is one of them), and unhampered activity by the defendant's lawyers. This doctrine is new in the Soviet Union. It is part of the democracy which the constitution introduces.

The constitution will be adopted by the congress of soviets scheduled to assemble in Moscow on November 25th, 1936. That date will herald a new era in civil liberties for Soviet citizens. Inhabitants of the U.S.S.R. always had numerous liberties of great value: the absence of economic exploitation, equality and special privileges for women, the elimination of disabilities against national minorities, favouritism towards the former " lower " classes which helped them reach the highest levels in politics, economic administration, science, etc., State care of the health of the healthy and the sick, consultation of the private individual at his place of work which had the effect of giving him a measure of control over his employer, the State; the numerous avenues, including special investigation commissions and the press, through which a citizen could complain against official discrimination and obtain justice, etc. Nevertheless, this liberty was incomplete without civil rights. Now these civil rights are granted to all including priests, former Tsarist officers, kulaks, and other ex-enemies of Bolshevism.

Indeed to-day the Soviet State fears nothing from the inside and less and less from the outside. Therefore the dictatorship yields to democracy. The essential feature of the new democracy is a two-chamber Parliament or Supreme Council which is the source of all governmental authority. The lower house is to be elected for a period of four years by popular vote—one delegate to each 300,000 inhabitants, not, significantly, voters—while the upper council of Nationalities, elected proportionately by the Governments of the national republics, national autonomous territorities, was instituted, although the two-chamber system seems to hark back to an ancient tradition, in order to protect the interests of the Soviet Union's numerous racial groups. Parliament passes all laws (hitherto decrees having the validity of law originated with many departments) and directs all the functions of the Government. It may, whenever it wishes, arrange nation-wide referenda on vital questions. It exercises the right of pardon. A Member of Parliament enjoys immunity. Only Parliament or, when it is not sitting, its presidium of 37 members, can deprive him of it. Both houses must approve a Bill before it becomes law. If they disagree and if no conciliation is possible, Parliament is dissolved and new elections take place. Both chambers together elect the Cabinet or remove members of the Cabinet. Parliament, it follows, can overthrow the Government. Parliament will engage in open discussion and criticism of Government acts. This may be the beginning of free speech.

LOUIS FISCHER

A LONDON DIARY

STIMULATED by the persistent rumour that Sir Thomas Inskip is Mr. Baldwin's own choice as the next Prime Minister, I made a point of going to hear him report on his progress as rearmament co-ordinator. I had been told that he was like a schoolteacher, but decided after listening to his rather stale and yet successful banter of the Opposition and his suave treatment of interrupters that he is properly to be compared to a headmaster. He is self-assured rather than self-assertive; he is pompous, high-principled, important, condescending and competent. He is built from the Arnold mould; his idea of a joke, his large phrases, his figure and deportment all date from a more solid and complacent age. I rather doubt whether these are the qualities which the Conservative Party most look for in a leader to-day. But it is not impossible that they will accept him if the only alternative is Mr. Neville Chamberlain.

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According to the Treasury circular which governs the behaviour of public officials, a civil servant may not indulge " in political or party controversy lest by doing so he should appear no longer the disinterested adviser of Ministers, or be able impartially to execute their policy. He is bound to maintain a proper reticence in discussing public affairs. . ." I quote this because I want to know how Sir Maurice Hankey, who is a very important Civil Servant, Secretary to the Cabinet and to the Committee of Imperial Defence, manages to reconcile it with his evidence before the Royal Commission on the private manufacture of arms. When his evidence was given last May, this journal expressed surprise that Sir Maurice should have constituted himself, as he himself put it, " counsel " for the defence of the private manufacturers. Now that we have the verbatim report of his evidence, this criticism seems to have been too mild. For Sir Maurice went far beyond the technical aspects of the question; he heaped abuse upon the critics of private firms, ridiculed the organisers of the Peace Ballot, and made jibes at the American Arms Inquiry which, as he several times said, he had never read. How can such partisan evidence about a highly controversial public question be fitted into the theory of our constitution? If a Labour Government should ever come into power and attempt to carry out its policy of nationalising private firms, as the French Government is doing to-day, how can it make use of the abilities of a public servant who has committed himself so violently to opposing the programme on which the Government would have been elected?

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The explanation I suppose is that Sir Maurice no longer regards himself as an ordinary Civil Servant. He is, to-day, the power behind the throne in England rather as Lord Esher was before the war. I once heard him speak. It was a most commonplace performance. But Sir Maurice's power is not based on the qualities that make for public success. He had the wisdom to refuse to accept Cabinet office during the war when he was a young man of not much more than thirty years old. The truth, I gather, is that he is the perfection of efficiency, that he is the most zealous and single-minded servant of the imperial idea in our generation, and that he has quite unusual gifts as an organiser and secretary. His memory is photographic and retentive. He is apt to remember after twenty years exactly what statesmen have said, and to recall it just when they would most willingly forget it. He can produce from memory a precise summary of a three hours' discussion in the Cabinet. I should have said, before seeing this evidence, that he had made himself " indispensable." Now I should say that he has made his own promotion to some other sphere of influence absolutely indispensable for any Government of the Left in this country.

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Most of the all-night sitting on the Means Test was conducted with great good humour. Everyone knew that Labour Members wanted an opportunity to show their constituents

that they had spoken, or even better, demonstrated against the Means Test in the House of Commons. In America their speeches (which no one would have listened to) would have been printed and distributed free to their constituents. Some of the Opposition back benchers arranged to obstruct by the old Parnell tactics of saying something unparliamentary and being suspended one by one. They were to start being suspended at seven o'clock in the evening. But they made the mistake of letting the I.L.P. group know about the scheme, and the I.L.P. tricked them by beginning a demonstration of their own at ten minutes to seven!

* * *

Behind all this, which might at first sound trivial, lay the knowledge in the minds of some members at least, of the really appalling condition of some of the distressed areas, of South Wales in particular. Unemployment and disappointment are producing there, as a friend who knows the district well said to me, the state of mind of pre-Hitler Germany. They say that they have been betrayed and let down by everyone and that other people are getting the benefit of the new work on re-armament. They are ready for almost any counsel of despair. At the moment they are rushing to Communism, but I am not sure that even that is very stable. I can imagine circumstances in which Fascism might compete. Unless the Government can make up its mind to spend money down there, without expecting a purely economical return for it in the near future—which means running the risk of giving its opponents the credit for what it does—these long years of under nourishment, enforced idleness and general demoralisation will show their results. Rioting on a large scale is not, I gather, considered unlikely in the near future. Will anything short of bloodshed wake up the public and the Government to the worst social problem that has confronted England in our generation?

* * *

I have before me a brilliant bit of anti-Nazi propaganda which is being distributed during the Olympic celebrations in Germany. It is an exact replica of one of the official leaflets—pictures of lovely old Germany with reading matter about the competing athletes and the fun everyone will have. Only in this "underground" leaflet you read:

> One hundred metres race. Favourites: The American negroes Owen, Metcalf and Peacock. The German athlete, Hans Mickenn, who has been sentenced to life-long imprisonment, has no chance,

and so on with each race. Then, instead of the official descriptions of the scenery and places of interest through which the traveller to Berlin will pass, I read:

> When you cross the Rhine here remember that this track leads to Papenburg, one of the most terrible concentration camps in which Carl von Ossietski has been tortured. . . .

and details at each place of political murders committed there. The advertisement of Berlin warns the tourist not to ask about the income made from distributing *Mein Kampf* or how Göring has come to own so many palaces for himself. Amongst the illustrations in this leaflet is a map with all the concentration camps and political prisons in Germany marked on it. I wonder how many heroic individuals will reach these places of torment for distributing this leaflet during the celebrations?

* * *

I had an interesting talk with Mr. George Elvin, who led the British team for the Workers' Olympiad which was to have been held in Barcelona last week. They arrived just before the Fascist rising, received a great ovation from the Spanish workers, watched all the working-class groups—anarchists, syndicalists, Socialists and Communists—gather together to resist, and then settled down for five days to do what they could to help behind the barricades. Mr. Elvin described the burning of a church, which he had himself witnessed. Traditionally, churches are sanctuary, but the rebels were smart enough to use them as vantage points for sniping. Sharp-shooters made their way into the towers, locked themselves in with food and held the roads below them. There was no way of dislodging them except by setting fire to the church. Just before the athletic team was told by the British Consul to leave Barcelona the workers made an interesting discovery among captured Fascist documents. Complete "martial law" proclamations were found duly printed by the rebels. Everything had been worked out beforehand—even the detailed orders for military rule to follow the destruction of the constitutional Government.

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The *Manchester Guardian*, which has an odd habit of hiding its light under a bushel, made very little display in its columns of a news item of quite unusual interest last Monday. I think it was the only British paper to reproduce from *Giustizia e Libertà* (the Italian anti-Fascist paper published in Paris) the detailed secret instructions to the Italian press from May 1st to July 7th. They are worth reading as examples of the kind of control exercised by the Italian and German Governments over their newspapers. Orders were sent not to say anything about the news of the attempted murder of a Fascist magistrate, not to publish a message from D'Annunzio, never again to refer to "Signor Tafari" or "the Negus," to "give little prominence to the promotion of the Duce's sons" (Count Ciano is, I gather, being worked into position of successor to Mussolini), not to mention the meetings of the I.L.O., to "take no notice of Russia" and not to comment on Maxim Gorki's death; "On pain of the severest penalties you are to abstain from all expressions of mawkishness and tenderness with regard to the Abyssinians. No sentimental episodes, no fraternisation. An absolute and clear division between the dominating race and the dominated race"; nothing further to be said about the return of Fascist officials from Abyssinia (there had been complaints about favouritism); nothing about "the unemployed in East Africa" or the "situation of foreigners resident in Abyssinia." Only the barest news about the occupation of French factories, "no colour, no importance, no illustrations," and many more prohibitions of the same kind. The positive instructions are equally explicit. "No comments on England: only news" (May 4th); "continue to write in a lofty strain about the Empire" (May 12th) and then, after Abyssinia's defeat, to keep Geneva news down to a single column and to "exalt" Italy's victory, quote foreign comment and finally to give "six-column headlines" to Eden's speech giving up sanctions. And so on and so forth.

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I have no doubt that Mr. Eden was telling the truth when he said in the House of Commons on Monday, July 20th, that he was not aware that Miss Wiskemann had made representations at the Foreign Office about her treatment. Perhaps the "English week-end" was to blame. A formal statement about the arrest and request that the Foreign Office should take the matter up had actually been lodged at the Foreign Office on the previous Thursday. As it was, Mr. Eden was sympathetic but not helpful. But a great issue is at stake. The issue is whether Hitler is to establish a dictatorship over the British as well as the German press.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Mr. Edward G. Startup.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

THE KING LIKENED TO SOCRATES—BOTH UNAFRAID OF DEATH.—*Kent Messenger.*

It is only those whose callings bring them into daily touch with the masses of working people, who appreciate the full extent to which the naturally healthy minds of the working-classes are being poisoned with dissatisfaction of their lot in life and against their capitalist employers. They are becoming bad citizens.—Letter in *Daily Telegraph.*

The particular advantage of the *Morning Post* as a "beer is best" medium is that its readers include all the influential few whose example sets the style for the many. These "citizens of light and leading" need reminding from time to time that beer *is* best and accept the reminder from the "Post" as they would a word in season from one of their old friends.—*Morning Post* advertisement.

A factor for peace. Our shareholders can, I truly believe, feel that besides being partners in a great and profitable business they are also helping the world towards the goal of international good will, for there can surely be no greater assurance of world-peace than prosperity built on good international trade.—Annual Company Report of Kruschen.

One day—I was going to say by some stroke of misfortune—the party opposite may be called to power, and I would suggest to them that they should reflect again, and reflect deeply, before burning their boats on the slippery slope that leads to disaster.—Mr. Boulton, M.P., in House of Commons, Unemployed Assistance Debate.

Mr. Julian had said that he believed that no place on earth showed such evidence of prosperity as did Britain. Mr. Duff Cooper remarked: "I rather wish that Mr. Julian had been in the House of Commons at any time since this time yesterday—or at any future time until eleven o'clock this evening—and had been able to assure some people who are not quite convinced of it that prosperity is apparent everywhere throughout this country and that everybody is well dressed, well fed, and perfectly content."—Report in *Manchester Guardian.*

My own personal reaction is that most ballets would be quite delightful if it were not for the dancing.—*Evening Standard.*

It is at least two years since you published in your columns a letter from me protesting against the crude, vicious, unhumorous and malicious cartoons of the unspeakable Low.

Since then he has gone from bad to worse, and his latest outrage on decency and good taste, which appeared last Friday, has, I am glad to see, drawn a volley of protest from your readers. (LORD) ALFRED DOUGLAS.—Letter in *Evening-Standard.*

Speaking of the decline of the dominance of the Victorian middle-classes, Professor Hearnshaw said:

"I used to think that the middle-class began at one end with the House of Lords, and ended at the other with people who could just keep out of the workhouse.

"Nowadays that is too wide. Many of the peers are going to the workhouse, and many inhabitants of the workhouse are receiving Peerages."—*Evening Standard.*

HOUSING IN STOCKHOLM

IN Stockholm I found a city more nearly without slums than any I had ever visited. The municipal officials are under the impression that there are some slum tenements in the oldest part of the city behind the royal palace; but after inspecting some of these at close quarters I found them to be far above the standard of anything which in England would be regarded as a slum dwelling. The relative absence of slums is, indeed, one of the outstanding features of the social scene in Stockholm; and this, as a leading Swedish politician explained to me, is fundamentally due to the fact that "we haven't got the slum mind." Nevertheless, there is an enormous amount of overcrowding. There are 14,000 one-room flats, and 33,000 consisting of one room and kitchen, making 47,000 out of a total of 170,000 apartments. Thus, a very large proportion of families must be living in flats consisting of one room and kitchen or less. This situation is, however, due less to poverty than to the habits of the people. All classes of Swedish society are accustomed to huddle together in relatively cramped sleeping quarters—a relic perhaps of the peasant tradition in a cold climate. But the rooms in every grade of home are bright, airy and spotlessly clean.

The population of Stockholm has increased from 300,000 in 1900 to 521,000 at the end of 1934. The rate of building in recent times is astonishing. Approximately one-third of the capital was constructed between the thirteenth century and the year 1900, another third between 1900 and 1921, and the remaining third since 1921. The recent housing is of two kinds. First, there are large apartment blocks, and second, garden suburb houses for individual families. The City Council has played an important part in regard to each type of development; but the rôle of the municipality is entirely different from that of an English local authority.

Municipal activity in Sweden starts with the ownership of the land. Something like half the land of the entire city is in public ownership, most of it having been acquired by purchase in the open market during the past thirty years. From 1904 onwards the municipality began to acquire large tracts of rural land outside the city boundaries and it now possesses about 20,000 acres of garden suburb estates situated within a radius of from 3 to 9 miles from the centre of the town. The municipal frontiers were subsequently extended so as to include these outlying territories.

The land in or near the inner city is leased for housing purposes either to private persons (for ordinary commercial building) or to co-operative societies. The Swedish co-operative movement has gone in for building blocks of flats on a vast scale; and the City Council has in many instances assisted the provision of low-cost dwellings by providing the land at half its normal value, or in some instances even less, and by advancing money at low rates of interest. In such cases the City Council lays down a number of conditions which have to be observed in regard to rent and amenities.

The co-operative apartment blocks are conveniently planned and appear to be well built. The accommodation is less adequate quantitatively than in modern flats built by English municipalities, most of the dwellings consisting of two rooms, bathroom and kitchen. But the equipment is far superior to anything I have seen here. The kitchens are fitted with double-sided stainless steel sinks, built-in cupboards and a large and luxurious type of gas cooker; and the bathrooms are more satisfactory than those provided in working-class flats in England. Central heating and constant hot water is supplied to all tenants and the cost included in the rent. The large central heating plant in the basement includes an incinerating unit which enables most of the garbage to be consumed on the premises, with a saving to the city in cost of collection of eight shillings a year for each household.

The communal services are excellent. An electric laundry in the basement, complete with a hot drying-room, can be hired for three shillings for half a day, in which time approximately 60 kilos of dirty linen can be laundered. The normal use of this is once a month by each tenant, which means that the remarkable standard of cleanliness common in Sweden can be maintained at a cost of less than ninepence a week for each household. There is also a cleaning room fitted with a powerful suction fan in which clothes, curtains or carpets can be dusted or beaten without producing unhygienic results for the tenant or annoyance to his neighbours.

Most important of all are the communal nurseries. These are contained in a separate one-story building in the courtyard. They comprise a series of delightful rooms specially designed for young children below school age, and include gymnasium, dining room, lavatories, playroom and rest room. A trained child welfare administrator is in charge, and tenants may leave their children in her care all day in the sure knowledge that they will be properly looked after. Three meals a day are provided at a total cost of about 7*d.* to the parents.

The rentals for these flats range from £40 to £45 a year, including heating and hot water—an important item. This is beyond the means of the lowest-paid workers, and the Social Democratic Party in the Riksdag is considering a new scheme which will aim both at raising the standard of housing of the poorest citizens and assisting those with larger families.

The individual houses in the garden suburbs are produced on highly novel lines. The prospective tenant first selects his plot of land, which is leased to him by the City Council

for sixty years, at a rental of about 5 per cent. of its value, with the option of a renewal in certain circumstances. He must then make a small lump sum payment of £15 to cover the first year's ground rent, fire insurance and so forth. The next step is for him to choose the type of house he prefers from a number of standardised models which have been developed by the municipality. The city will then supply him with all the materials required for the construction of the house and show him how to do a considerable part of the building work by means of his own labour and that of his friends or members of the family. The key to the whole scheme lies in this essential feature of partial construction by the prospective tenant, for by means of it he contributes approximately half the labour required on the actual site, thus materially reducing the cost of the house in terms of money.

The houses are of wood construction, in accordance with the usual Scandinavian practice, built on a foundation of aerated concrete blocks. The roof is of tiles, the chimney of pre-cast cement blocks. All the structural parts are standardised and the wall sections are pre-fabricated at the factory so that they arrive ready for erection with doors and window frames already in position. Gas and water pipes are delivered cut to precise measurements.

The prospective tenant is furnished with a handbook explaining exactly what he has to do. In each garden suburb there are skilled engineers employed by the city (one for every fifty houses under construction) whose function it is to instruct the owner in the task of building, to supervise his efforts, to assist in case of emergency and to keep a careful record of materials supplied. In addition, the city provides skilled labour for those parts of the work which are beyond the amateur, such as plumbing, electrical installation, sheet iron operations and so forth. Throughout the entire process the City Council exercises the strictest control over the standards of construction and the expenditure of the credit advanced to the home builder, since the security of the city's financial interest in the enterprise depends on satisfactory building and the avoidance of waste in materials or labour.

The standard types of houses available are mostly with two floors and a basement. The ground floor and first floor comprise either two, three or four rooms and kitchen, according to model. The basements are spacious and carefully designed, and contain central heating furnace, bathroom with laundry apparatus, larder, coal-bin, water closet, and a large workshop or garage. Every house is fitted with electricity and gas, and is connected to the city sewage and water systems.

These houses make admirable homes. In selecting the tenants, who are mostly wage-earners with incomes between £3 and £5 a week, preference is given to indoor workers and to families with children. During the last few years more than 50,000 people have been provided with comfortable homes in the garden suburb by this method without any subsidy from taxation being required. The city grants a credit of approximately 90 per cent. of the estimated cost, excluding the labour contributed by the owner. The annual charges, including ground rent, rates, repayment of loan, fire insurance, chimney sweeping, and water supply, amount to between £40 and £52 a year according to the type of house.

There are four main points in the housing programme of Stockholm from which we could learn something for use in this country. First and foremost, there is the bold and far-sighted policy of public ownership of a large proportion of the land. The social and economic advantages which have resulted from this are incalculable, both from the standpoint of effective city planning and in making it possible to provide working-class housing in good situations at moderate rents.

Second, the possibility of providing large blocks of flats through co-operative societies is successfully demonstrated in Sweden. This suggests a method of eliminating profit-making from housing by means other than those to which we have become accustomed. It brings within reach the occupation of flats by resident owners—a commonplace on the Continent and in the U.S.A. among the well-to-do, but almost unknown in England. By co-operative building, this could be applied to quite low income levels.

Third, the desirability is emphasised of paying much more attention to common services, amenities and conveniences, in the provision of large blocks of working-class flats, than our housing authorities at present accept. The substitution of flats for houses in the big centres of population in England, which is now being carried out, could be made a great liberating movement for women so far as much of the drudgery of housework and child care are concerned, and also enable women who desire to work to do so more easily than they now can—but only if many more labour-saving devices and collective facilities than those at present contemplated are provided.

Finally, there is the new idea of doing one's own building under municipal tutelage. I believe the value of this idea to be not merely financial or material, but also moral. It is not merely that we can afford potential forms of self-expression of this kind—our over-urbanised civilisation cries out for fruitful ways of filling leisure time. It is also worth considering as a method of associating individual effort with collective action in the intimate and vital function of home-making.

WILLIAM A. ROBSON

THE BEEF SUBSIDY FAILURE

ANOTHER £3,900,000 has been voted to subsidise home producers of beef, with a promise of a new scheme. When this money has been spent, together with what has been disposed of in a similar way during the past two years, we shall have devoted about £10,000,000 of the taxpayers' money to unsuccessful attempts to provide reliable fair prices for home producers.

The present unsatisfactory scheme followed another which aimed at achieving the same result by artificially restricting overseas supplies. It was a dreadful failure. It put up the price of chilled beef in the shops and did nothing at all for the home producer.

So far as we have been told anything of the *new scheme* that is promised, it will continue the same fruitless drain upon the taxpayer as the present one, because it will retain the same fatal deficiencies.

In order to understand the case and to realise what is perpetuating this shocking waste, we must remind ourselves of what has been happening. All the schemes have ignored the fact that the success or failure of any food-supply system is determined in the end by the Woman with the Basket. She is the real arbiter. If she cannot, or will not, buy, *that* settles it.

The first abortive effort, which proceeded by the method of restricting supplies, quickly brought about its own undoing. The price of chilled beef went up because of the restriction of supplies and, as the housewife had no more money to spend than before, she naturally bought either a smaller quantity of beef or looked about for something else. In no case, of course, was she tempted to buy *more* of the higher quality home-produced article. The consequence was that beef consumption declined and, as the demand fell, so did the home-producers' price.

The second plan (which is still in operation and is to be fortified by another £3,900,000 to carry it on until July of next year) is also in its turn proving a failure, for other but quite obvious reasons. The subsidy payment is nominally made by giving the producer an extra five shillings per *cwt.*, liveweight, on cattle sold in a market and marked as approved for the purpose. The machinery for granting the subsidy certificates and for making the payments is worked quite efficiently by a special committee; but all the same the farmer is not getting the extra price.

When the scheme was introduced he naturally expected that the five shillings would be additional to the then prevailing

market price. But things have not worked out in that simple way. The farmer apparently is expected to accept the "fluctuations" in market prices as some sort of divine dispensation from which there is no escape.

The case could scarcely be better stated than it was in the plaintive speech of a Tory farmer in the House of Commons last year, who related his own experiences. He told us that shortly before the scheme was introduced he had sold some fine cattle in Hereford market for 37*s.* per *cwt.* and that, recently, although the subsidy had been in operation nearly a year, he had sold an equally fine lot for 37*s.* 6*d.*, including the subsidy of 5*s.* He wanted to know where the missing 4*s.* 6*d.* had gone!

There was of course no mystery about it. "Market" prices had fallen by nearly the amount of the subsidy and the 4*s.* 6*d.* had been absorbed by the various middlemen who operate the present senseless system. The price of beef to the housewife had not fallen and the farmer had got sixpence instead of the expected five shillings.

This process of absorption of the subsidy has continued at various price levels and will undoubtedly go on so long as we are satisfied with a system whose maxim is "Pay the producer as little as possible; charge the consumers as much as possible, and make all you can out of the two of them."

On various occasions last year when different blocks of subsidy were being voted we were told, first, that time was wanted to consult Dominion representatives then on their way to this country; later on, that time was required for negotiations with the Argentine, and so on. The Dominion representatives have been here and returned home long since, and we have now to wait until July next year before the Government will have fully matured its plans. By that time these meditations will therefore have cost the country the £10,000,000 already mentioned.

We are told that under the new plan the subsidy will be increased to £5,000,000 a year, that the Treasury will reimburse itself to an undisclosed amount by taxes on foreign beef and veal, and that there will be an Empire Meat Council and an International Meat Conference which, between them, will "regulate" the amount of meat we are to import.

Neither of these bodies of course, will have any authority whatever over what happens here, and there is no vestige or indication that any fresh arrangements are likely to be made. This being the case, we may be absolutely sure that, whatever the rate of subsidy, the present market system will be just as capable of sucking up £5,000,000 as it is £3,900,000 without any compensating advantage either to the producer or to the consumer of beef.

To make matters worse, the two new Authorities are to decide how much imported meat the country is to get, so as to be able to bolster up prices by imposing an artificial scarcity. This will perpetuate the pernicious practice that led to the breakdown of the first scheme.

What tens of thousands of people want is more meat, not less; and our first duty, plainly, is to have a National Import System, divorced from self-interest, which is designed so as to see that they get it.

The home-producer, in his turn, is entitled to a price system on which he can rely, which will foster good production and carry with it the condition of the payment of a vastly improved standard of wages. In the case of beef, this can only be achieved through a responsibly managed Abattoir system which pays the producer his due and eliminates the disgraceful increases of cost that characterise present market operations.

The needs of the consumer can only be met by arrangements that make the most advantageous use of all sources of supply. According to the present scheme, both the consumer and the taxpayer are made to suffer for the inefficiency of the marketing system. A sensible scheme would embody in the prices charged the benefits of the imported supplies. Whether for home-produced or imported food the people would be asked to pay no more than a reasonably managed marketing system requires.

CHRISTOPHER ADDISON

Correspondence

CLASS AND NATIONAL WAR

SIR,—Recent discussions about war seem to assume that the next war will be like the last war, in so far as the alignment of forces will be that of Government against Government or Nation against Nation. But the situation in Spain and its effects upon the Governments of Europe—like the situation in Austria some years ago, indicates that the next war is much more likely to arise out of an internal revolution in some country, either from the Right or from the Left, than out of any "aggression." And if there is revolution in any country, the sympathies of different groups in all democratic countries are likely to be sharply divided. It is said that even the present French Government of the Left has had difficulty in supporting the *de jure* Government in Spain, when, in the phraseology of a *Times* correspondent, "the mob" is killing "the leading citizens." The situation is easier diplomatically when "the leading citizens" are killing "the mob"; for in most countries, diplomatic and consular officials, foreign residents and foreign visitors are more closely in touch with "the leading citizens" than with "the mob." The phraseology implies assumptions which would be too crudely evident, if the words used were "the rich" and "the poor."

In the old days a rebellion against an established Government, or at least a Government *de jure*, was not assisted by other Governments even to the extent of refusing to sell arms to be used against rebels. But now apparently Governments are "neutral" as against rebellion on the Right, even if Fascist Governments have fomented that rebellion. Rebellion on the Left, as in Austria, does not seem to induce "neutrality" of that sort. In such cases all Governments are inclined to support "the leading citizens." The question is, therefore—what action ought a democratic Government or an Opposition in a democratic State to take, when rebellion in another State is supported by foreign "propaganda"? Unless we face the possibility of such situations, the strategy of peace will prove as inadequate in a world of radio, aeroplanes and machine-guns, as the strategy of generals was in the last war. The definition of "aggression" and "the collective system" may be useful in the case of an old-fashioned war of nations; but they do not solve the problem of a war arising out of veiled intervention in an armed rising. The traditional diplomacy and international law may be actually misleading in a world in which diplomatic immunity gives an advantage to Fascist and Nazi Embassies. Indeed, the difficulty goes even farther back, and affects the traditional views of "the State" in its internal relations. It is not enough to oppose Hegelian State-workings; and in this matter, Marx is only Hegel standing on his head. Dictatorship in any country is the result of a victory of one side in a civil war—veiled or open; and it naturally tends to support civil war in other States. The problem is not difficult for any country in which blind obedience to an irremovable Government is sufficiently widespread. The Government in such cases will decide which rebellion abroad is good and which is bad. But if any form of democracy is to survive, and if opposition to any foreign policy or criticism of it is still to be allowed in any country, we shall have to think in new terms of the rights of *de jure* Governments. The traditional hesitation to criticise other Governments than our own was based upon the assumption that criticism was still possible among their own citizens. But the application of "democratic" principles to international affairs would indicate that the citizens of any one State have a duty towards the citizens and subjects of other States than their own. It may be difficult to say what that duty is, when a foreign Government is secretly fomenting appeals to violence abroad. When a speech is made by a foreign visitor at a meeting of "the mob," that is called "propaganda"; but when a speech is made by another foreign visitor at a dinner of "the leading citizens," that is "the promotion of friendly relations." Officers in the armed forces are peculiarly susceptible to this form of "the promotion of friendly relations," and may not readily carry out certain kinds of policy—a "League" policy, for example. It is no solution of the difficulty to suggest that all opposition to a Socialist Government would be suppressed. If democracy is too difficult for the available intelligence or ability, we shall return to cruder forms of government; but if democracy is to survive, we shall have to think in new terms about foreign policy as well as about civil rights.

C. DELISLE BURNS

BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

SIR,—It is sad when friends come to the parting of the ways. There must be many like myself who welcomed the Labour Party's scheme of national economic planning and monetary control, but now stand aghast at its foreign policy and its conception of national defence. Your leading article of July 11th, which moved Mr. Keynes to ask some searching questions, moved me to tears. If I understand it rightly—you and the Labour Party, having committed yourselves to a foreign policy of "support for the collective system," are now calling on the workers of this country to resist a Government which *in your judgment* goes to war as a result of betraying the "collective system." If this statement is correct, I must regretfully part company with my Labour friends for the following reasons.

First, assuming that your judgment were correct and that a National Government did land Great Britain in a war as a result of betraying the so-called collective system, your policy of war resistance, i.e., refusing to serve in the armed forces or to perform work of national importance, which is a policy of rebellion, is the quick and certain way of enabling a Fascist Government to assume power in this country. We are all becoming acutely aware of the fundamental conflict between Communism and Capitalism, which is being fought out in bloody form on the Continent, but if the Labour Party plays its political cards well, the transformation of private capitalism into State capitalism—the Socialist objective—can surely be achieved in Great Britain without bloodshed. It can be achieved by Parliamentary means—by securing the "middle" vote and the backing of the great Nonconformist conscience which, as "Covenanter" says in his pamphlet, is the nearest thing to a revolutionary spirit in England. If the Labour Party thinks that it can take a short cut to power by "war resistance," i.e., rebellion, it will surely call up all the latent forces of Fascism in this country and find itself utterly exterminated. I am continually being reminded in my daily work of the strength of that body of opinion which would range itself as "national" or Fascist against all Socialists refusing to fight or defend the alleged interests of this country. In this country the embryo Fascists (non-Mosleyite) are intelligent and efficient and can be well and quickly organised. They would wipe out organised Labour as effectively as they killed the General Strike of 1926. It would not be a Labour Party which would be left to work underground: it would be the Communist Party. I fail to see any reason for copying in this country the bloody tactics of political parties on the Continent.

Secondly, are you not misleading the workers of Great Britain by your foreign policy of "support for the collective system"? Is it not a pretence to say that you will back a National Government which supports a "collective system"? We all know now that economic sanctions, even if resolutely applied, are futile to restrain aggression. We know that the only effective collective system is the use of collective force against an aggressor, and if we are honest with ourselves we must admit that this is only possible and will only work when the contracting States are democratic or socialistic Powers. You and the Labour Party would not vote money for armaments, or send the workers to fight, in a war to protect, say, a capitalist Government in Poland or a clerico-capitalist dictatorship in Austria. You would only fight if the aggressed-against State is honestly democratic or Socialist. Your plea of support for a collective system in a Europe which is only in part democratic is therefore a dishonest plea. What you really want is an alliance (you would call it a pact of non-aggression and mutual assistance) between the Socialist-Democratic States of Europe if that can be made behind the disguise of the League of Nations. That is apparently what Mr. Keynes wants. But we are not likely to get it if the Labour Party destroys itself in Great Britain by an act of political suicide.

Is it too much to ask the Labour Party leaders at this eleventh hour to change their policy? By hammering the Government to press Hitler to set an upper limit to armaments, they might do good work in the cause of peace, and even if they failed they would have educated the country to the German peril, if there is one. To show their disgust of the National Government's foreign policy and its drift to war, they might abstain from voting on the rearmament estimates and walk out of the House, but to vote against these estimates and persist in an insincere plea for collective security means, to my mind, forfeiting the middle vote and the constitutional way to power. If ever the Labour Party does assume power, by God they will want all the arms the National Government is now giving us.

NICHOLAS DAVENPORT

SIR,—Those who have so far taken part in the controversy raised by Mr. Keynes's letter do not appear to distinguish between the policy which Labour should advocate in opposition and that which it should adopt in power.

England is (or at least, was) the only first-class power without immediate fears or needs in Europe and was therefore in a position to concentrate upon her sole European interest—peace indivisible. For this reason collective security depended upon the moral prestige of England. She was the one country which European opinion believed capable of taking part on moral grounds in a war in which she lacked a material interest. In the absence of British leadership the League was bound to become—and indeed, when it became clear that Britain was not prepared to risk a single ship in the cause of world peace, the League became—but a grouping of nations upon the scales of the balance of power.

With the best intentions in the world the present Government could not re-establish collective security because collective security depends upon the prestige of Britain, and for the life of this Government British prestige is dead. They have no choice but to play power politics, and experience has taught us that the most dangerous thing in power politics is an indefinite policy. In 1914 France would have accepted almost any ultimatum had she not expected British support, and Germany would not have delivered one had she not relied upon British neutrality. Under her present discredited leaders England's word is not trusted in Europe and the possibility of her intervention can only be a gambler's chance. People are inclined to remember that which they wish to remember. France will remember 1914; Germany will remember Abyssinia, and neither will be able to believe the Government. The only definite policy therefore open to this Government is that of non-intervention. While it is perfectly true that the certainty of her intervention against an aggressor would probably secure peace, the inevitable uncertainty of her intervention will be far more dangerous than the certainty of her neutrality.

Determination on the part of Labour to oppose, during the life of this Government, war whether under the auspices of the League or not, by revolutionary methods if necessary, can eliminate this uncertainty and may postpone the war which must ultimately result from power politics.

In power Labour may be able not only to postpone but finally to stop war. This may be achieved if a powerful England can assume the leadership of the League powers and compel all nations to choose between disarmament and the formation of a new and powerful system of collective security on the one hand, or to submit to economic boycott, enforced if necessary by blockade, or war against overwhelming odds upon the other hand. This can only be achieved if England, when the time comes, has not only resolute leaders but powerful armaments behind them.

Northampton. R. T. PAGET

SOCIALISTS AND PACIFISM

SIR,—Speaking personally as a military sponsor of the Peace Pledge Movement and as one who suffers from no "mind confusion" as to what war is and who does not believe "war" can become anything other than "war," no matter how clever the camouflage, it appears to me that the members of the P.P.U. could individually support a Popular Front provided a practical plan could be devised which could be supported by Dr. Sheppard, and on that account would recommend itself to his supporters, such as myself and others who follow him because he seems to us to embody all those qualities which we fought for in the war. It is obvious that if all the M.P.s went mad or became sane overnight (dependent on the point of view) and voted for instant unilateral disarmament, time would have to elapse, as in the case of demobilisation after the war, while the principle was being put into practice.

As a practical soldier, the example comes to my mind of the Canadian–U.S.A. frontier, fortless and without defence, yet a hundred years ago stiff with defences. Gradually the defences had fallen off as their "use" declined—owing to truce being established behind the few custodians of the line left largely for form's sake and to please the conscience and appease the fear.

I believe if a Popular Front took its courage in both hands and cast off the mistake of believing that *effective* sanctions can be applied without war arising, and decided to *effectively* apply the reasoning behind the Kellogg Pact instead, a half-way would be found where pure pacifists could meet those who fear to take the leap in the dark.

Something on the following lines seems practical and possible, if all the clauses be carried out concurrently:

(*a*) Setting up a proper League at Geneva—open to all on equal terms and not a League of victors alone—based on faith and not force, for the solution of all the problems which cause war.

(*b*) Abolition of all air forces.

(*c*) International control of civil aviation.

(*d*) Setting up of "fixed defences" by all States, by land and sea, on a minimum establishment and the employment of science and engineering to the full.

(*e*) Disbandment of all expeditionary and mobile forces, territorials and militias.

(*f*) Formation of civil guard reserves to take the place of military called out in aid of the Civil Power (it being now the constitutional duty of the individual to run to the support of the police in emergency).

I know that the very idea of Englishmen in uniform to some is like a red rag to a bull, but the fact remains they exist and seem like continuing till such a time as the "attack" becomes a thing of the past. And I believe the plan outlined above to be better than serving out gas-masks that may not work, constructing dug-outs in places where they will not be wanted and pretending to "defend" when, from a broad military point of view, there is no "defence." F. P. CROZIER

East Lodge, Walton-on-Thames. Brig.-General

TOWARDS A NEW LEAGUE

SIR,—Mr. Brailsford's eloquent pamphlet *Towards a New League* includes this sentence:

> It is remarkable that, even in the heat of just anger against Mr. Baldwin's Government, neither of the Opposition Parties nor yet the League of Nations Union suggested military action [in resistance to Italian aggression].

This statement does less than justice to the League of Nations Union. The minutes of the meeting of the Union's Executive held on September 10th, 1935 (immediately before Sir Samuel Hoare's speech to the Assembly), include the following:

> There appeared to be a general consensus of opinion that if, despite the efforts of the Council of the League of Nations and, in particular, of His Majesty's Government to bring about a just and peaceful settlement of the so-called dispute between Italy and Abyssinia, Italy should fulfil her threats of war against Abyssinia, Great Britain should forthwith propose to the Council as a recommendation that Members of the League, as part of or in addition to such other action as they may decide to take under Article 16 of the Covenant, should withdraw the heads of their diplomatic missions from Italy, exclude Italian products from their respective countries, and, if these measures failed to stop hostilities, then they should do all in their power to sever communications between Italy and the Suez Canal. In proposing such a recommendation, the British representative would, of course, let the Council know that Great Britain would immediately act upon the recommendation if it were adopted.

Again, on April 2nd, 1936, the following resolution was passed with three dissentients:

> The Executive Committee of the League of Nations Union,
>
> Re-affirming its determination to uphold and apply universally the principle of collective security,
>
> Considers that, unless the Italian Government stops the war in Abyssinia forthwith, the Committee of Eighteen should be summoned and effective sanctions imposed, including oil sanctions, a shipping embargo, and, if necessary, the severance of communications between Italy and Abyssinia.

May I add a comment upon one of Mr. Brailsford's conclusions? Like Lord Lothian, he would have us accept a "Federal Solution" of the problem of world government.

I yield to no one in my admiration for those ex-Englishmen who, a century and a half ago, discovered how to apply representative government to half a continent by means of the "Federal Solution." But I do not believe that a federal government, directly taxing the individual citizen and holding office only during his pleasure, is any better suited to the world as a whole (or even to so large a part of it as the British Empire) than was King George III's government to the original thirteen States of North America. Despite much able advocacy of federal government for the British Commonwealth, another solution, another discovery, was needed. It was found in the system known as "Units within a larger Unity" that keeps the peace in a quarter of the world to-day. Need we assume that the creators of the Covenant made a mistake in preferring the system of the British Empire to that of the United States as the model for their new League? The British system does, however, depend for its successful working upon the creation of a widespread loyalty to the larger Unity as well as to the Units within it. MAXWELL GARNETT

The Athenaeum, Pall Mall, S.W.1.

AN EYE-WITNESS IN SPAIN

SIR,—I returned to England from Spain on July 26th, after spending forty-eight hours in France on the way home. As even the most reputable newspapers, both in this country and in France, seem to be representing a criminal rebellion by the Army and the Church as a Red Terror, the following facts may act as a corrective.

On Saturday, July 18th, General Franco landed an army of Moors in the south and at the same time the troops in Barcelona revolted. The Government, who were uncertain of the loyalty of the Civil Guard (a fear that has so far proved unfounded), armed every man upon whom they felt they could rely to oppose the rebels. This in effect meant arming the various organisations of the extreme Left, the Union Marxista, the Union Generale de Trabajeros, and so on.

When the revolution broke out, I was in Sitges, a small seaside town, about three-quarters of an hour by train from Barcelona. We saw nothing of the revolution until July 20th, when the hotel staff were called out by the Government, but after two days were allowed to return as it was known that there were many foreigners in the hotel, and the Government throughout have shown the greatest anxiety not only for the safety but even for the comfort of foreigners. After July 20th Sitges became completely under the control of the Government's irregular forces, and the town was entirely at their mercy. These men were the poorest of the workers and unemployed, who could, had they desired, have burned the hotels (many of which were known to have strong Monarchist sympathies), destroyed the villas of the wealthy Barcelonians and raped the singularly attractive ladies with which Sitges was full.

On July 21st a lorry-load of armed men came to our hotel, a machine-gun from the lorry being trained on the hotel entrance. These men came through the hotel lounge, which was full of the classes from which they were struggling to free themselves. Instead of insulting the guests they said "Good evening" to us and told the manager that he was above all things to see that all the foreigners were properly fed and looked after. When the foreigners had been fed the hotel was to feed the committee of safety and then the Spanish guests. Despite these instructions, the foreign and Spanish guests continued to eat together, to the knowledge of the committee, and not until the guests had had their meal did the committee eat.

Never at any time during the six days that I was in Sitges after the revolution were we ever short of food, although the food supply was under the control of the Defence Force who, I learned, on one occasion were only able to obtain water soup and dried sardines for their own evening meal.

On July 21st the contents of the churches were burned. The Communists took the images, the vestments, the pictures, books and chairs and made bonfires of them in front of the churches. In all cases they took immense care not to harm the buildings themselves. I am not attempting to defend these burnings, but I do want to emphasise the care with which they were carried out. There is a convent school at Sitges. Immediately after the revolution the nuns fled, leaving the children to fend for themselves. On the other hand, the nuns who ran the hospital remained at their posts and were unmolested.

I neither experienced nor heard of any atrocities perpetrated by the Government supporters in either Sitges or Barcelona, with the exception of the doubtful story of the decapitation of the Italian Consul in Barcelona. I met with nothing but politeness from them.

On the other hand, the story at Barcelona is that the revolution had hardly started when a rain of machine-gun bullets poured indiscriminately into the crowds of civilians going up and down the Ramblas from a machine gun stationed in the building of the Italian Cosulich Shipping Line. This building has now been burned down and its occupants shot.

All these impressions are, of course, subjective, but as I am a Conservative I need not be accused of undue bias to the Left.

58 Finsbury Pavement, E.C.2. STEPHEN LEVY

WHAT IS "ENGLISH"?

SIR,—I know nothing of Mr. Mencken, whose book Mr. Garnett reviews this week, but he has, apparently, written on an important subject and has fallen into an absurd mistake into which I doubt whether Mr. Garnett has not followed him. The mistake is in supposing that there is any way in which English *ought* to be spoken.

It is true that to me with my personal upbringing most American dialects and so-called "slang" seem long-winded, inexpressive and slightly disgusting. But am I on that account to say that they are *wrong*?

Is the skunk *wrong* to possess its stink glands? And is not the study of language part of natural history? The history of our ways of expression is an entrancing subject of which I only wish I knew more, but let us keep it clear of morals and of moral indignation. To write a book like what, from the review, I imagine Mr. Mencken's to be, or like Fowler's *King's English*, is to resign the office of a scientist for that of a pontificating booby.

ADRIAN STEPHEN

50 Gordon Square,
W.C.1.

KENYA

SIR,—About a month ago you published a letter making certain statements about Kenya. In your issue of July 18th you repeat one of these untrue statements in your own Comments. You say that the native "is deliberately prevented from growing certain crops which might come into competition with settlers' produce."

Natives are not now prevented from growing any crop. Formerly they were not allowed to grow coffee only, not because it would compete with settlers' produce, which is ridiculous on the face of it, but because of the great difficulty and cost of controlling coffee diseases and pests. Kenya coffee is grown for export and is, and always must be, such a small portion of the world supply that an addition from native producers could never affect the settlers. As I previously stated, natives are now to be encouraged and helped by the Government to grow coffee, though I do not suppose the European growers will be very happy about this, as it will add to the risks in growing this difficult and expensive crop.

In the same Comment you also say: "The Native cultivator already has to compete against heavy discriminating freights on the Railway." This is absolutely untrue and I challenge you to give a single example of discrimination, heavy or light. All country produce is given specially low rates of freight on the railway, and many of these special low rates are on produce raised exclusively by natives. Where a low rate is given for produce raised by both settlers and natives it, of course, applies to both equally.

23 Queen's Gate,
London, S.W.7.

A. K. CONSTANTINE

[The refusal to allow natives to grow coffee has long been a serious grievance in Kenya. We understand that as a result of much agitation coffee-growing by natives is now allowed, if not encouraged, in one small area, deemed reasonably safe because of its distance from the main coffee-growing belt. With regard to freights our correspondent chooses to forget that the only export carried at exceptionally low rates, is maize, which is settler-grown, and that these rates do not apply, for example, to imports of cotton goods for native clothing.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

EDGAR ANDRE

SIR,—The following letter signed by:

The Rev. A. D. Belden,	Lord Horder,
Prof. P. M. S. Blackett,	Julian S. Huxley,
Dr. Stella Churchill,	Susan Miles,
Prof. F. M. Cornford,	A. A. Milne,
Oliver Edwards,	Prof. G. E. Moore,
Prof. B. Farrington,	Canon C. E. Raven,
Prof. J. B. S. Haldane,	Helen Simpson,
Viscount Hastings,	Olaf Stapledon,
Dr. Pryns Hopkins,	R. Vaughan Williams,

has been sent to the President of the Supreme Court in Hamburg:

Public opinion in Great Britain has been seriously disturbed by the news of the death sentence passed on Edgar André for high treason during the period 1929-33, and for moral responsibility for a murder committed in March, 1931.

Since there were no accusations against the prisoner at the time when the alleged crimes were committed, and the laws under which he is condemned have been operated retrospectively, it may well be thought that political bias may have played some part in the verdict. We therefore respectfully urge, in the interests of better international understanding, that clemency be shown to Edgar Andre.

23 Haymarket,
London, S.W.1.

MARGARET GARDINER,
Hon. Sec. For Intellectual Liberty

Miscellany

FRENCH JOURNEY

I HAVE just had a fortnight's holiday in France, invited by a group of French writers, "L'Alliance Intellectuelle pour le Rayonnement Français a l'Etranger." We were whirled from Paris round Auvergne, Provence, Dauphiny and Savoy, eating too much good food and drinking too much good wine. The pleasures of sightseeing were doubled by the company in which we saw the sights, for we had with us several of our distinguished hosts. (The organisation of the tour was flawless; indeed, I have lived long enough in Germany to know that the Germans are not more competent than the French—their arrangements are more complicated, more rigid, and less effective.) A similar expedition in this country would be impossible, though we have landscapes, we have architecture, which one would be proud to show to foreign friends. I imagine a tour to include Oxford, Cambridge, Bath, the Cotswolds, the Dukeries, Durham, the Lakes and the West Highlands, but in how many places would one obtain food carefully cooked, or bedrooms such as we found everywhere, with a good modern bed, an electric lamp beside it, a table to write at, and a private bathroom? "Le confort anglais" is now hardly to be discovered except on the other side of the Channel. There are several gastronomic guides to France, fat volumes giving the best places to eat—often quite humble inns—and the special dishes to be tasted in each. I fear that a similar guide to England could be contained in a penny broadsheet. A great improvement in English hotel food is not to be looked for because the mass of English people have lost their palates. (An official employed by one of the great motor organisations to inspect hotels admitted that he could not distinguish between sole and plaice.) So meat will continue to be overcooked, vegetables to be old and tasteless, ices to be made of custard powder—the public like to have it so. But I see no reason why our plumbing should remain so antiquated. During the seventy years between the disappearance of the post-chaise and the triumph of the automobile, provincial hotels everywhere declined. In France to-day every little town tempts the motorist with all that he can desire. How far have English hotel bedrooms improved within living memory?

But ought I not to be talking rather about the windows of Bourges, the gardens of Nîmes, the fortress-palace of Avignon, the mansions of Aix-en-Provence, the most beautiful, because the most unspoiled, of all French towns? Or the museum at Grenoble, which has the four finest Zurbarans I ever have seen, as well as an astonishing collection of modern paintings by Picasso, Matisse, Bonnard and the rest? Or of Vichy, a town of the highest importance to all amateurs of 1900 a nouveau architecture and decoration? There I had the honour of meeting Monsieur Vielé-Griffin and Monsieur Dujardin, veteran symbolists, who fascinated me with stories of Mallarmé and Whistler and Verlaine and George Moore. (It seems that Mallarmé's English—he earned his living by teaching it—was even worse than Moore's French.) I could talk too about douches and massages, for we visited four different *établissements thermaux* (is there an equation: Intellectual = Valetudinarian?)—or about wines, magnums of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, drunk just above the vineyard, and jeroboams of Mouton-Rothschild—or about *téléfériques*, which are the modern equivalents to funiculars—slung on to a too slender-seeming steel rope we were whirled 3,000 feet up in six minutes—or again about the Savoyard landscape, the smiling valleys around the lakes of Bourget and Annecy which were the birthplace of romanticism, but as I sort out my recollections of this journey there are two places which top the rest—where Voltaire lived and where Rousseau died.

Enthusiasm for Voltaire comes easier to an Englishman than a Frenchman, for in this country he has never been vulgarised or counterfeited: we have had no Monsieur Homais,

not even an Anatole France. He bought Ferney in 1758—he had been living in Genevan territory at Les Délices, but he feared trouble with the Calvinistic City Fathers. Ferney was inside France, but so close to the frontier that he could slip across into Switzerland if danger threatened from Paris. It had the merit also of a beautiful view, and he lived here for the last twenty, and most glorious, years of his life. The château remains almost unchanged: the trees he planted have grown high. A *charmille* or avenue of hornbeams forms a shady tunnel with windows cut in it towards the distant Alps. (A dangerous ivy, I noticed with consternation, is strangling these historic trees.) The chapel in the grounds still bears the arrogant inscription "Deo erexit Voltaire," though it is now disaffected and no longer contains the relic of St. Francis of Assisi which the Pope sent to the philosopher. The columns and pilasters of the house still bear witness to Voltaire's taste for what he called the Italian style and inside there are armchairs embroidered by fat bustling amorous Madame Denis, innumerable likenesses of Voltaire; and a portrait of Catherine the Great which she sent him, and a hundred other relics including faience stoves from the pottery he established in the village. If his Jesuit (or his monkey) could re-visit the château he would find no cause for dismay. There is no turnstile, no post-card stand, no musty museum atmosphere, for this is a private house, not open to the public, though I understand that the amiable proprietors, who received us so charmingly, will, whenever possible, admit visitors who have written beforehand for permission. Ferney could not be in more pious hands. Here Voltaire quarrelled and groaned over his health and indulged his petty spites; here he transformed a squalid village into a flourishing little town, here he exhausted his energy (but was it not inexhaustible?) in fighting bigotry and cruelty and injustice on behalf of the Calas and la Barre and how many others; here he cultivated his garden, surviving to walk in the shade of the trees he had planted; here, with the white shoulder of Mont Blanc showing on occasion through the lucid air, he invented and perfected the phrases of *Candide*, which still glitter untarnished like the perpetual snows.

The visitor who as a matter of course goes to Versailles, Fontainebleau and Chantilly often neglects Compiègne. Yet it is of an architecture more distinguished than the repetitive pomposity of the Versailles Palace. It was designed by Gabriel, the greatest, I think, of all French architects, for it was he who built the Petit Trianon, the Place Stanislas at Nancy, and the Paris Ministère de la Marine. Louis Quinze suggests to most English ears the capricious frivolity of Rococo, but the classical style we associate with Louis Seize became fashionable long before Lewis the Fifteenth's death. Compiègne suffers, indeed, from an excess of austerity. It was completed, very conscientiously, by a pupil of Gabriel, and it is permissible to fancy that the great architect himself might have added a little to the ornament if he had lived to judge the entire effect. A large part of the interior was remodelled and redecorated for Napoleon—unluckily, since the insensitiveness and vulgarity of the Emperor are reflected in the Empire style. The furniture of his time, charming when it is simple, becomes oppressive and even hideous when overladen with gilt for palace purposes. All the prosaic clumsiness and overloading of the nineteenth century are already implicit here—we have crossed the watershed. Compiègne forms a decorative palimpsest. Louis Quinze and Louis Seize staircases and saloons and tapestries remain. Then there are the Empire rooms, and finally the apartments of Napoleon III, with whose reign the palace is most conspicuously connected. Here the Winterhalter beauties peacocked in their Worth crinolines, here Merimée groaned over the cold and discomfort of the rooms allotted to him.

About half-way between Paris and Compiègne the gloomy northern plain breaks into a smile. There are soft feminine contours to the country, with idyllic groves and modest lilied lakes. Here Gérard de Nerval wrote his exquisite *Sylvie*, inspired by visions of Mme. de Feuchères riding among the trees. (She was an Isle of Wight fisherman's daughter, who became the mistress of the last of the Condés, and is suspected of murdering him.) Here is the XVIIIth Century Abbey of Châalis, with a collection of works of art and a museum of Rousseau relics. Close to it is the ruin of the Gothic Abbey-church—a ruin so picturesque that M. Louis Gillet, the learned curator of Châalis, sees in it the deliberate composition of an artist, perhaps of Hubert Robert himself. It was an age when men of taste decorated their parks with artificial ruins, and evidently it was cheaper as well as more effective to ruin a real building than to build a sham ruin. A few miles away this taste for the picturesque is beautifully manifested in the Park and "Desert" of Hermenonville, where the Marquis de Girardin, a fervent disciple of Rousseau, sculped hills, modelled lakes, and planted trees to imitate the landscapes of Poussin, Ruysdael and Salvator Rosa. The rocks are inscribed with quotations from Petrarch and *Julie*, while a plaque on a ruined temple invites the philosopher to "rerum cognoscere causas." Rousseau himself came here, approved, lived for six weeks, and died. On a little island his tomb still stands, surrounded by a circle of poplars, looking like cypresses that have cast their mourning. Here Joseph II, Marie Antoinette and Napoleon came as pilgrims, and though Rousseau's remains are now in the Panthéon, the carefully composed elegiac landscape remains a consummate monument to the philosopher who believed Nature to be so much kinder than she is.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

THE MUSE AT MALVERN

In England it pays to plod on. The Eighth Festival of Drama at Malvern offered in advance nothing of outstanding interest. The only novelty was an adaptation of *Jane Eyre* by the lady whose version of *Pride and Prejudice* came to London and success by way of a previous victory in New York. Three more or less familiar plays by G. B. S., an eighteenth-century comedy, a revived item of the Brontë boom, and the inevitable *Lady Precious Stream* (even with Mr. Hsiung attending in his blue canonicals) could hardly be expected to pack a fair-sized town and make the caterers rejoice. The casting of Miss Wendy ("Love-on-the-Dole") Hiller as Saint Joan was interesting, but the acting hardly possesses the allure of the Hardwicke-Richardson-Donat seasons. But it pays to plod on. The Festival is more successful than ever before. It has happened eight years in succession: so people are beginning to hear of it. They come: they stare: they even buy seats.

There was the Birthday. The business of being eighty may, even for a professed Methuselist, be tiresome and Mr. Shaw has expressed his weariness with the affair. But like Royalty, he does not flinch: he faced the ceremonial, the cameras, and even the salutations of an Urban District Council. Can one be given the Freedom of a U.D.C.? Mr. Shaw has earned it a dozen times over: in Malvern he is the landlady's prop, the hotel-keeper's stay, even the publican's succour, and the price of a casket would be a small token of esteem. On Monday at twelve-thirty the great man spat on his hands, took up a spade, and planted a mulberry tree in the Public Gardens amid a tangle of talkie-apparatus and the click of cameras. Thus he guaranteed to future Malvernians the raw material of countless Shaw relics. The mulberry tree, as he observed, put him in the Shakespeare Class. Stratford and Malvern are our Midland rivals in the purveying of Cultural Revel and both are doing excellent business this summer. Saying it with mulberries at Malvern was a good touch. For the Stratford tree vanished long ago.

The English people have a certain genius for garden parties; the atmosphere of panama hats and rapidly melting ice-cream is as natural to the mild whoopee of Malvern as buns and tea-urns and the steam of righteousness are to a Non-Conformist outing. Mr. Shaw had no sooner planted his mulberry than he returned to social duty on the lawn. Double the numbers expected swarmed to the scene, thus embarrassing the caterers, adding to the difficulties of those who love to

spot celebrities, and easing the problems of those whose first concern is to dodge a bore. Festivals of this kind provide terrific opportunities for the ancient and exacting exercise of bore-dodging, a sport which often supplies a very cheerful spectacle for those who are above the battle but know the particular problems and personalities concerned.

Mr. Shaw laid it down that nobody was to give him a present of greater value than threepence. Did anybody have the courage to send him a Blue Pencil? Yet after the production of *Saint Joan* on Saturday (surely the slowest and longest in the history of the play) and that of *On the Rocks* on Monday, it was impossible not to repeat the criticism, of which Mr. Shaw never takes the faintest notice, that by leaving a little out the dramatist would really get his word in more effectively. Miss Wendy Hiller's Joan was young, alive, kicking, and exciting; it corresponded admirably to the stage directions. But the Trial Scene somehow missed its full effect; the pace, I think, had got so slow that both players and audience were losing their grip. *On the Rocks* was taken at a much better rate. But there are some flabby passages amid the strenuous political back-chat. Who cares twopence whether or how the Prime Minister's children are mated? Yet we are dragged through the matrimonial bickering and chaffering as though it were of high concern. That Blue Pencil might have been churlish for the occasion; but the apt is often the impolite.

Sir Barry Jackson has done a strange thing at Malvern. By plodding on he has managed to fill a country town with visitors for four weeks in the year by laying on a supply of art. It is hard enough to coax the English into a theatre at any time, more especially into a theatre of serious intention. He has gathered them into his own country and has made them clock-in at mornings to lectures and at nights to drama of all kinds. After the play they relax to the extent of dancing, but this, as they say in *Ruddigore*, " is one of our blameless dances." For though the hotels in Malvern have " extensions " till midnight, the one place where people meet to talk, stroll, dance, and generally attempt festivity is strictly denied any licence at all. Why is it that whenever the English try to organise their gaiety they come to these preposterous conclusions? If Malvern vetoed all liquor save that which gushes from its own rocks, the veto would at least be logical. But to illumine your public gardens, make great show of festal bunting, summon dance-bands, and then to deny your revellers even a glass of lager, while actually prolonging the facilities for drinks of all kinds in hotel lounges, is one of confusion's madder masterpieces. What can the foreign visitor make of such a discipline?

IVOR BROWN

MASSINE'S BERLIOZ BALLET

ONE may think that the ideal for ballet is a collaboration between composer, choreographer and scenographer working together from the start without going so far as to declare that it is wrong to devise ballets for symphonies which have been composed for performance as such and are complete in themselves. So long as we admit that a performance of *Choreartium* or of *Les Présages* is no substitute for the performance of Brahms' fourth and Tschaikovsky's fifth symphonies in the concert hall, there is no reason why we should not enjoy the ballets which Massine has invented for them. Nevertheless, the ballet is, in my opinion, an important art-form of such rich potentialities that, like the opera-form, it is susceptible of a degree of co-ordination of its different elements which is probably more difficult to achieve when the music is already given and has been composed without thought of its use in the form of a ballet. It is not because either of superior music or of superior choreography that I consider, for example, such a ballet as *L'Oiseau de Feu* to be a more successful work than *Choreartium* or *Les Présages*, but because it is a more organic whole. There is no reason why Massine should not try to make a ballet to Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*, but there is a good reason to doubt whether such a ballet will be completely successful. I believe, however, that to the general public, which will be hearing this music of Berlioz's for the first time at the ballet at Covent Garden, Massine's *Symphonie Fantastique* will seem more successful than to musicians who are familiar with the score. Yet the production of this work shows how risky it is to theorise dogmatically as to what is or is not possible. Those who have declared outright that it is impossible to invent a ballet to go with a symphony without degradation or destruction of the music will have seriously to consider Massine's new ballet, which is altogether a remarkable achievement, surpassing, in my opinion, both *Choreartium* and *Les Présages*. I would not say, however, that it does not distort to some extent Berlioz's great composition. But, since we so often hear distortion of some kind or other when the *Symphonie Fantastique* is played in the concert hall, it would be absurd to make too much of this distortion which is, indeed, almost inevitable.

On the other hand, Massine has succeeded in presenting one movement out of the five which make up Berlioz's symphony in such a way as to add a marvellous interpretation of the music, just as a producer and actor of genius might illuminate the play of *Hamlet* by a creative stage production of it—I refer to the famous third movement, the *Scène aux Champs*. It was an absolute inspiration to give this movement a classical landscape setting, and in this Massine has been served extraordinarily well by his scenographer, Christian Bérard, whose scenery and costumes are perfectly delightful. But it is not only the setting of this movement which is satisfying, for the choreography which Massine has devised here reveals a plastic imagination of a high order. There is in the choreography of this movement a true pictorial invention, and every posture, gesture and movement is expressive and significant. The music seems almost as if it were being visually realised before one's eyes from bar to bar. The very special and rather indefinable atmosphere of this music has been perfectly caught, and I must confess that, whole-hearted Berlioz enthusiast as I am, I almost feared to breathe as I watched this scene so pure, so tranquil, so imbued with the spirit of the marvellous music which it, as it were, re-creates plastically before one's eyes. I consider this scene to be the highest point so far reached in the art of the choreographer. It also provides an instance of a perfect use of an old contrivance in the art of ballet, namely, the appearance on wires, floating through the air, of the prima ballerina, the incarnation of Berlioz's *idée fixe*.

About the other four movements I cannot be equally enthusiastic, but this does not mean that they are unsuccessful. Quite the contrary, for I believe that with the public the ball-room scene (second movement), the March to the Scaffold (fourth movement) and the last movement are the most popular. I was impressed by the ingenuity with which Massine had dealt with the fourth movement without being convinced that he had found the perfect treatment of it. It does not impress one as inevitable in the way the third movement does, where one cannot imagine now any other choreography or decor. Also, in spite of its thrilling effect on the audience which, of course, was largely unfamiliar with the music of the symphony, it is not nearly as thrilling as this movement sounds when played correctly in the concert hall.

But it is the first movement which satisfied me least and I believe that Massine may be able to revise it with advantage, although I admit that one saw it on the first night with all the disadvantages of the first performance of an extremely elaborate piece of choreography which would depend partly for its effect on the perfection with which it was performed. Both this and the ball-room (second movement) ought to gain greatly by repetition. The setting of this ball-room scene is extremely good, for it is no easy matter to devise anything fresh and convincing for such a hackneyed subject. This also applies to the choreography, for the choreographer cannot avoid the waltz which dominates this movement. I think, however, that this scene will gain greatly as the performance improves technically, but I reserve my opinion as to its real

adequacy until I have seen the ballet more often. My criticism of the first movement is chiefly that for some reason or other the choreography lacks the poetry which is immanent in the music. Here again one must reserve a final judgment for later. In the meantime I advise everybody interested in ballet and in music to go and see the *Symphonie Fantastique* at Covent Garden for it is a unique experience.

W. J. TURNER

PLAYS AND PICTURES

The Gulbenkian Collection at the National Gallery.

With admirable and characteristic enterprise the Director of the National Gallery is exhibiting eighteen paintings from M. Gulbenkian's collection. No less than nine of them have in the past been an ornament to English houses. The two Rembrandts from the Hermitage are masterpieces in the strictest sense, showing the powers of a supreme artist at the top of his form. Owing to high varnish and the National Gallery skylights, one finds oneself examining in detail not the models' faces but one's own; perseverance, however, reveals flesh-painting that is almost unique. Rubens's full-length of his second wife, also from the Hermitage, similarly deserves every superlative of praise. The *bravura* of the black frock, the harmony of the smoky green feathers and violet bows, frame a face and bosom painted by an incomparable artist who was also passionately in love. The splendour of these three works is in danger of blinding the visitor to the excellence of their neighbours. But the Gainsborough is one of the most brilliant and lovely portraits ever painted in England, and we have never seen two better Guardis. (Those who still underestimate this painter's genius, should study the texture of these pictures, and the extreme delicacy of colour, as, for instance, in the contrast between the blue hangings and the grey stone of the Procuratie.) Then there is a most fascinating Fragonard, with soft foliage that no other pre-Nineteenth Century painter could have achieved, and lovely water, and the oddest mauve on a pleasure boat. And a Lancret *Fête Galante*, so good as to make one re-estimate this artist's powers. And a first-class Boucher. And two charming Hubert Roberts of the Versailles gardens in the making. And a Van Dyck of the best period. And a Cima. And a Carpaccio. And, if you must have a fly in your amber, an exquisitely insipid Romney. Altogether a roomful which is a sight for sore eyes, and we wish M. Gulbenkian could be offered a dukedom to leave his pictures with us for good.

"San Francisco," at the Empire

In this film everybody talks about sin. Perhaps we're such a hard-boiled set of sinners to-day that the sins of San Francisco around 1906 now appear to us as Faith, Hope and Charity. Anyhow, the night life shown in this picture wouldn't call a blush to the cheek of cousin-from-the-country while the applause accorded to Jeanette MacDonald's singing of cabaret and grand opera numbers could hardly be labelled sin. *San Francisco* has all the ingredients of a good M.G.M. film: three first-rank stars, Clark Gable, Jeanette MacDonald and Spencer Tracy; lurv, night-club entertainment, grand opera, spectacle on a large scale, and God. The last item tends to pall a bit, but Spencer Tracy in a dog-collar is well worth seeing; the combination is almost unbelievable but he pulls it off and is about the one really convincing thing in the whole picture. The story is uninspired; Miss MacDonald's heart flutters overmuch between the so sinful night-club proprietor and the rich and respectable grand opera boss, before alighting, where we all knew it would alight, in the last reel. However, it is treated as a film and, because this is rare, the result is worth seeing. The climax is the earthquake, and these sequences provide some excellent trick work, photography and cutting: houses crash to the ground, streets gape open, fires are extinguished by dynamiting surrounding buildings and the wounded groan and groan and groan. Through it all marches Gable, looking tough and handsome in tails, muddy and torn from having had a night-club fall on him. He is, of course, seeking the girl. With the aid of Padre Tracy he finds her, singing hymns on a hillside. He is converted. The fires are out. San Francisco is delivered from the earthquake into the arms of God.

"Laburnum Grove," at the Plaza

Mr. Priestley is the major champion of the Little Man, his spiritual defender against the rich on the one hand, and the very poor on the other, in fact a bulwark of respectability. But respectability, even when liberally garnished with the sauce of gossip, is apt to become monotonous. So Mr. Priestley wrote *Laburnum Grove*, which was a very successful play; and a British film company have photographed it (with a few alterations to permit of occasional camera movement) and it will doubtless prove a very successful film. In it a respectable, genial, hard-working Little Man is shown to have a Hyde to his Jekyll. Respectability is revealed as having a tang of crookedness. It is all done in a very gentlemanly fashion: there is no gangster stuff; nothing ugly or disturbing about it; it is, in fact, rather heroic, and suburbia will surely return to its Laburnum Groves much refreshed. Edmund Gwenn, who played the part on the stage, again proves his worth as a character actor, creating the Little Man by subtle touches of light and shade, always achieving just the right key. Cedric Hardwicke as the sponging brother-in-law is unfortunately never subtle; music-hall tricks and over-emphasis in general produce an air of unreality. In this film Victoria Hopper appears hard and not specially attractive. This may be the fault of one department or other of the British film studios, which have not yet acquired the Hollywood technique for creating or adding to feminine beauty on the screen.

THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, July 31st—
New Education Fellowship Conference, Cheltenham. Till August 14th.

SATURDAY, August 1st—
Marx House Workers' Summer School, Oldfeld, Swanage. Till August 29th.

MONDAY, August 3rd—
"The Thirty-Nine Steps," Everyman Cinema.
Labour Fete. Speech by the Rt. Hon. C. R. Attlee, Thaxted, Essex.

TUESDAY, August 4th—
Dublin Horse Show.

THURSDAY, August 6th—
"The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse," Haymarket Theatre.

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THERE are a large number of books, a whole section of literature, which one reads not for their subjects, but in order to spend one's time with their authors. It might be objected that this is usually the case, but there is a distinction between works of poetry and imagination in which the author makes one see visions and books in which one stands at the author's elbow and looks, with him, at the real world. One kind is not necessarily superior to the other. Thus *Green Mansions* and *A Crystal Age* are books in which one sees W. H. Hudson's visions, while in most of his other books one stands at his elbow, and in *Far Away and Long Ago* one looks back at his life. One reads him for his company, not because one wants to learn about vizcachas and huanacos, though they are interesting: nothing that he observes can bore one. Hudson is at his best when he is writing about himself, which is all too seldom. There was in him an inner melancholy, a nobility that sprang from a complete absence of fussing about his own character, which is the reason why the more intimate you are with him the better you like him. One does not seek such a close approach to everyone. Richard Jefferies, who shared the same interests as Hudson, can be embarassing when he speaks of himself, and even the best companions along the road are sometimes boring when they attempt intimacy. There is a good deal to be said for those who prefer to keep their readers at a distance.

* * *

I have just finished reading *News from Tartary*, by Peter Fleming (Cape, 12*s.* 6*d.*), with very great enjoyment, and since I care nothing whatever about the political situation in Central Asia (that is to say, I don't prefer one race, or army, or political label to another) and am not attracted by any of them, you might guess that I read the book for the pleasure of Mr. Fleming's company. Like thousands of other people I am charmed by his impudent street-urchin approach to danger and discomfort, to hunger and thirst, bugs and lice and to those blood-sucking bigger bugs, the Chinese generals backed up by their executioners and machine-guns. As all readers of *The Times* will remember, Peter Fleming set off from Pekin and made his way to India, lacking a proper passport and armed with the famous rook rifle, with the self-confident cheekiness that you see in small boys stealing rides on the tailboards of lorries and dodging the coppers on point duty through the traffic. He is so perfectly well equipped that one does not worry about him, any more than one worries about how the sparrows in London find their food. Unappetising to bugs, indifferent to lice, without a sense of smell, and boasting (I think untruly) that he has no palate, he starts with astonishing advantages. In addition he has the capacity to make himself liked by ugly customers and to make real friends everywhere, out of the strangest material. He can shoot well enough to pick up his food wherever there is any game and he can ride any kind of animal. It was, however, a remarkable series of lucky flukes that got him through.

* * *

The chief fascination of *News from Tartary* is not Mr. Fleming himself, though I find his character extremely interesting, nor is it his inadequate picture of deserts shut in by mountains, and the everlasting howling wind that rages over them, nor the Tartars, nor the oases whose inhabitants are victimised by the various armies, rather as green flies are milked of their juices by disciplined tribes of warring ants. These are all interesting, but the fascinating figure in the book is Kini Maillart, Mr. Fleming's travelling companion. He tells us that she is a newspaper correspondent, a ski international, who has knocked about in such and such places and met such and such people. A photograph of her plucking one of the geese that he shot, tells us more. Yet Mr. Fleming, and his Leica, tell us little and leave us with an insatiable curiosity. He reports practically nothing that she said and scarcely inquires into her feelings. At the end of the book one is absolutely bewitched by her and yet one knows hardly any more about her than if Mr. Fleming had travelled with a dog or a cat. This is, of course, intentional and inevitable, but it is maddening and is the secret of the book's tantalising charm. Fortunately, however, Mlle. Maillart is probably now engaged in writing her own version of the journey, and she has written books already which I shall get hold of at once. They both got pleasure from "doing the same stages every day that Marco Polo would have done if he had branched south from the Silk Road into the mountains." They were both in deadly earnest, determined to achieve what they had set out to do, and felt that it was thoroughly worth doing. And they were both made happy by leading "a bestial existence," that is to say, living the lives of underfed and overdriven horses.

> We were not so very far above the animals. Our days, like theirs, were ruled by the elemental things—the sun, the wind, the frost. Like them we lay on the earth to sleep. Like them, we were interested above all else in food. We were never short of food; but, with the exception of perhaps an hour after the evening meal, there was no single moment in the day when we would not have eaten, and eaten with the greatest relish, anything that appeared remotely edible. Dog biscuits would have been welcome. A plate of cold tapioca pudding would have vanished in a flash. Your dust-bins, had we come across them, would not have been inviolate.

If the reader knows from any inadequate experience of hiking round the home counties what is meant, he will feel envious. If he doesn't know he ought to feel more envious still. One day Maillart and Fleming marched for eleven hours without food, during the last few of which they pulled and pushed a moribund pony over a mountain pass which appears to have been something over fifteen thousand feet up, rather than not bring it into camp. And when Maillart was crippled with lumbago, dog-tired and in pain, she spent what might have been the siesta in killing the maggots that poked their white heads out of a stinking ulcer on one of the camels. Neither of the partners was squeamish, and in a world which prides itself on exaggerated brutality, or exaggerated squeamishness, they appear extraordinarily attractive, merely because they possess the particular blend of toughness and tender-heartedness which ought to be normal among decent people.

* * *

The general impression left by their account of the races they met is that there is little to choose between one brand of vileness and another. One's sympathy, naturally, is with the bottom dog, and the most defenceless caste in Asia is the White Russian. Blown to the uttermost ends of the earth, they may be found scattered in every slum and every desert. Borodishin, "*un brave homme*," lives somewhere south of the Gobi, still yearning to see his wife and family, though in 1927 he was warned to give up all hope of getting into touch with them, since the Reds will not let them leave Siberia. Fortified by doses of valerian to steady his weak heart, Borodishin saw his surprising visitors over the mountains to their next stage. If one sympathises with Borodishin, what must one feel for the Armenian, marooned in Tartary by disease, yet European in culture and in interests and keeping a pathetic finger on the world's pulse by taking in the weekly edition of *The Times*? Sinkiang is full of other exiles, Chinese, longing for their own country—and doomed to order the marching and counter-marching armies of the soldier ants. At first one thinks that had Peter Fleming trekked through a Brobdingnagian enlargement of Fabre's *Lives of the Insects*, the picture would have been much the same. Then one comes across the Tungan soldiers resting on the march with their prisoners, laughing and chatting and amicably catching the vermin which their shackled charges could not reach. It is quite a surprise to find man behaving, sometimes, with the humanity of a monkey.

DAVID GARNETT

ACE MORALITY : A DOCUMENT

Sagittarius Rising. By CECIL LEWIS. *Peter Davies.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

This is a book which everybody should read. It is the autobiography of an ace, and of no common ace, either. We are all much concerned just now with the danger of being bombed, gassed, and burnt alive, women, children and all, with our water and electricity cut off when we have become helplessly dependent on them. Well, the hand that can release these judgments on us is the hand of the ace. And the ace may be a lad of 17. Indeed, it is not clear that such an age limit is necessary. The late Sir Horace Plunkett learnt to fly when he was over 80, having been recommended to take mountain air for sleeplessness. I believe I could have taken a plane into the air and released a bomb when I was 15.

Under such circumstances the moral training of our lads might be expected to rouse some concern or at least some curiosity. Apparently it is not even thought worth mentioning. When Prime Ministers and Secretaries of State for War in their great rearmament speeches proposed the enlistment and training of several thousand youths to rain destruction on the capital cities of the world, it never occurred to them to give any particulars as to the course of Diabolonian education which is to fit them for a delight and pride in this new and very startling department of human activity. How are we to test and select for the requisite high spirits, sense of mischievous humour, and moral irresponsibility which must go to make a boy ready to convert a city of God (more or less) into a City of Destruction?

Mr. Lewis solved that problem for himself without any misgivings. At the age of 16 he found himself so "air minded" that he transferred himself from his famous public school to the Flying Corps in the spring of 1915 without consulting anyone. Now, if the public school had been Eton, Harrow, Winchester, Rugby or the like, Mr. Lewis would have been a ready-made Diabolonian. But it was not: it was Oundle: Oundle under Sanderson the Great, who cordially agreed with me as he showed me round the scene of his triumphs that Eton and all the rest of them should be razed to the ground and their foundations sown with salt. Thus Mr. Lewis had a quite special Sandersonian-Wellsian pacifist schooling. His father was and is a distinguished sky pilot, not a bomber, but one who has never left the ground, nor rained anything but sermons on his fellow-creatures. The boy was not the usual young public-school Caliban whom nothing can tame or humanise: he had all the noble tastes and qualities, love of nature, love of beauty, love of poetry, soaring imagination, and physical gifts that eventually carried him to a height of six feet four inches, with a brilliant endowment of good looks. In short, one of the best, perhaps the very best, of all the recruits of 1915. He could have won his Military Cross and his promotions on his appearance alone.

As a matter of fact, he won them by committing all the atrocities of air warfare with an enjoyment that lasted until his demobilisation with unbroken nerve and unscathed limbs at the end of the war. He had a charmed life in every sense of the word. And throughout it all he never disliked a German except for twenty minutes on a black night when the Gothas were bombarding London, and somebody he loved was on the ground beneath. That brought on a fit of Berserker fury in which he deserted his defensive post and plunged vengefully into the thick of our own anti-aircraft barrage in search of a Gotha to bring down. But the Gothas eluded him in the darkness; and the fit passed very quickly.

And now comes the test question. How did the exceptional humanity of this prince of pilots react to the demand for atrocities made upon him by his duties? As it happened he was never a bomber. He won his cross on observation patrol, which needs daring, intelligence, reckless exposure to Archies, but has not slaughter for its direct object. In the second phase of his service, which was offensive patrol, he was a duellist, guiltless of the blood of women, children, and civilians. It was, as he puts it, Hector and Achilles, a battle of champions, fought in flying chariots with machine guns instead of Homeric spears. So far, nothing unpardonably Diabolonian.

Unfortunately, there was one incident which spoils the chivalrous picture. It reminds me of something that happened to myself one evening many years before the war. One cheerless evening, walking through Battersea Park, I came upon a vast ruin that had old associations for me. It was one of those enormous glass structures that came into vogue in the middle of last century with Paxton's Crystal Palace, originally the Hyde Park Exhibition. These monsters were as movable as bird cages. One of them appeared during my boyhood in Dublin as an exhibition building on the site now occupied by the Catholic University. It was taken away to England, where it was re-named The Albert Palace; and, after what wanderings I know not, got finally stranded and abandoned in Battersea Park, where it confronted me in the dusk like a ghost from my nonage. There was something spectral and tragic about it; for all Battersea's boys had thrown all Battersea's stones (there were stones in the streets in those macadamised days) at its million panes, leaving nothing unshattered save its monstrous and miserable skeleton. You can imagine with what bitter reflections on the wanton destructiveness of my species I passed on.

Suddenly an unbroken pane of glass caught my eye. It was irresistible. I believe I should have been shying stones at that pane to this day if the appearance of a park-keeper and the dignity of my professional position had not forced me to pass along harmlessly with every fibre of my being crying out against leaving that pane unshattered.

To return to Mr. Lewis. He was in the sky on a bloodless observation patrol contemplating a desolated terrain over which the tides of war had swept in and out. I had a glimpse of it myself in 1917, when, sightseeing round the Front, I found places where villages had been with nothing left of them but a prostrate signpost with a name on it, or a wheelwright's emplacement showing through the snow. Mr. Lewis's reflections were no less sombre, his generalisations no less tragic than mine in Battersea Park. The pilot in him sublimated into the poet and philosopher, as so often happened to him in the empyrean.

Suddenly he noticed a solitary house that had not been demolished. His observer saw it, too. And the same strange call of nature griped them both. They had no bombs: bombing was not their business, nor was their machine equipped for carrying or launching any such projectile. No matter: they returned to their station, wangled a bomb, shipped it at great risk of being blown to pieces by it, and returned to hover over the dwelling that war at its worst had spared. Lewis brought all his mental powers into play to ensure a direct hit. He calculated his height, his distance, his speed and that of the wind with a conscientiousness which made success mathematically certain; and at his word the observer managed to heave the bomb overboard, again at considerable risk of its resenting such improper manhandling by a premature explosion.

The story lacks its tragic consummation. The house stands to this day presumably; and the pit dug in the earth by the bomb a mile or two away has long since been filled up. But the page from the real psychology of war remains. Mr. Lewis, like all sane men, loathes war. Nobody could sing more fervently than he: "How beautiful are the feet of them that bring the gospel of peace!" But he had a shot at that house all the same. Had the war lasted another month he would have bombed Berlin. So should I, I suppose, had I been in his place. Mr. Lewis has a good deal to say about it, and says it very well; for he is a thinker, a master of words, and a bit of a poet. But there are the facts at first hand. The funniest passage in the book deals with the disappearance from the dinner table of two of his messmates who were smashed by one of our own shells. The passage is: "The battery rang up to apologise." Why must we laugh? Because, I suppose, if we took war seriously we should all go mad.

Some people like war. There is to all of us a side that likes it. We should provide for the gratification of that liking as a sport, even if we have to suppress its political exploitation. It could be done every year on Salisbury Plain. And as there is no fun in poison gas, and mechanised warfare has reduced courage to absurdity, we might reconsider Fielding's remark that battles might be fought just as well with fists as with musketry.

Mr. Lewis was clearly not deficient in natural tenderness. He was apparently always in love with some lady; and it cannot be doubted that many ladies were always in love with him. Touching these matters with an admirable delicacy, he never tells us that it was not always the same lady; but as his heart was broken again and again by tragic partings seen dimly through his vein of poetry, one may suspect him of inconstancy, but not accuse him of indiscretion or insensibility.

BERNARD SHAW

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A Gun for Sale. By GRAHAM GREENE. *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Bird Alone. By SEAN O'FAOLAIN. *Cape.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. James Hanley is, considered as a novelist, a fortunate man. His life—character—circumstances have enabled him to grow and develop so to speak from the bottom layer upwards: broadening out from a basic realisation of the harshness and violence of existence to achieve a more spacious view of humanity; and this without losing his way or becoming less true to himself in the process. He has not been obliged to sink through early security, through the comfortable acceptance of established conventions and opinions—those patent foods which build no bone—to disillusionment and its attendant distortions. He did not presumably start with the handicap of the old school tie; nor, beset by the pleasant beauties of cultured country houses or the dreaming spires of universities, has he trodden the primrose path to an everlasting dismay. What is most satisfactory about his equipment as a novelist is the feeling he gives one that there must be plenty more where all this came from. His surface is broad, level and simple, almost smooth; the roads and by-roads marked in in plain outline; the completed world lies bare under a curiously uncoloured light: but life informs the whole of it. *The Secret Journey* is a continuation of Mr. Hanley's saga of the working-classes. The first volume was called *The Furys*. The story is dominated by the characters of two women: Mrs. Fury, mother of the Liverpool Irish family with whose fortunes Mr. Hanley is concerned, and Mrs. Ragner, Jewess, moneylender, in whose net the whole family is finally engulfed. They are a terrific pair. To determine which is the more essentially wicked and destructive would be a nice point in morals: for the obviously harmful character carries danger-signals all over her: we know we are fools to be beguiled by her or to hope that good may come from her; but the mother is heroic, virtuous, pious, self-denying, a character on the grand scale, whose pride and ambition make a murderer of her favourite son. Her gradual petrifying touch on the world around her, until all is stony desert, has the quality of inevitability. The description of the money-lender's house is magnificent. We see it from the first in a kind of heavy darkness, as if already within its walls good things of day have begun to droop and drowse. Those figures, their very names—Anna Raguer, Daniel Corkran—seem to block out the light.

A tendency to diffuseness is Mr. Hanley's chief enemy; and there is something wrong with his dialogue. One cannot always recognise the individual voices speaking. It is as if the author had lapses in which he were deaf, or simply not bothering to listen; but instead imposing on his characters a refined, rather Victorian convention for conversation which, combined with the occasional bad language and slang, has a disconcerting unnatural effect. There is also now and then a touch of long-winded facetiousness in the author's commentary upon his characters:

> If Mr. Kilkey had been endowed by nature with eyes at the back of his head, and therefore in the fortunate position of being able to see what went on behind as well as in the front of him, he would have been surprised at the early hour at which his wife got up. . . .

Such sentences as this are irritating and could so easily be weeded out. A word of gratitude is due to the publishers for their detached, unemotional few words upon the wrapper.

It was an odd experience, after following Mr. Hanley upon his journey, to attempt to pursue Mr. Strachey upon his. The least a reviewer can do is to approach each new novel without preconceived notions of what it should be like. It is hard for a writer to find himself scolded for not doing what he never intended or attempted to do. But Mr. Strachey bewilders me. No sooner has one pinned him down in one mood and style than he switches to another. On his last page we read:

> In life the Golden Heart is crossed and fretted, seeking ever to escape the grossness and ugliness of the world. But still there are sanctuaries: and, dearest Jacob, our heart (the wise woman knew we had but one between us) has come home.

This reads like the simplified happy ending to an old-fashioned love-story. But doubts assail us. Is Mr. Strachey's tongue in

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his cheek? This inn with its symbol of the Golden Heart, this magic landlady with her mother-wit ("I shall see you again my pretty pair when your hearts are made gold") seem, when we look back, to make a parable all out of key and inappropriate.

> "I feel a bitch now," says Sukie, "and I never want to be anything else again."
>
> "Yes, I'm glad that's happened to you. That's what we all are really—dogs and bitches. It's a clean, simple thing to be, too; but what a hell of a mess we make of it: finding a thousand reasons for wearing fancy dress."
>
> "But not at this party, Jacob—not even a nightdress."
>
> "Come here, Sukie."
>
> "Jacob, am I all right for you? I mean do you like——"
>
> "Shut up. Look, let's get down to it, now."

Is this love before hearts are made gold? Or an expression of Huxleyan dislike of human passions? Or Mr. Strachey's idea of honest love?

Yet, a little further on, he sets his pair beneath an unequivocal poetic light, so that, for a moment, we are moved by them:

> They stood at the side of an old tombstone on which were their names—Jacob and Susan. But could they ever be dust? It seemed not possible. And yet Jacob, in the sudden turn of a thought, believed that old Jacob to have won a victory over death itself since his Susan still lay with him; and he envied him this long since settlement.

And Jacob is not only Jacob but Mr. Heartsease, bogus psychologist, in a false beard. Personally I prefer him in this guise. The scene in which his mother comes to him for advice on remarriage is amusing. This Anglo-Indian lady is my favourite character. Her reminiscent meditations about India, her diary of her son's infant years, are distinctly endearing. But then she is given a serious Freudian trouncing. And Mr. Heartsease's secretary is in love with Susan's husband. And the Devil himself is another character. And long passages from Donne and other poets are set down whole all of a sudden without annotation. And there are further odd ingredients in the shape of Charlie Gunter, artist, and the Hon. Peter Ward-Dunning, member of London's Bohemia. They take a pot of marguerites from a war-memorial and are arrested. The court-scene, in which a plain narrative might have made telling satire, side-slips all of a sudden into an hysterical extravaganza. Altogether a mystifying affair, with plenty of talent. The book is very attractively produced; but this time I think the blurb is inclined to overdo it.

Beneath his title *A Gun for Sale* Mr. Graham Greene has written An Entertainment. To my mind, it more closely resembles a long elaborate dream-experience: one of those dark disorganising circumstantial dreams which unwind in more or less logical sequence: dreams of immense conspiracies, with oneself moving against an Enemy unseen, all-powerful, oneself in the predicament of being obliged to save the world. They are all there—the wicked faces, the shots, the solitary figures in the streets suddenly there and then not there, the sinister abnormality flickering without warning out of the bland normal surface, like a black snake out of an innocent crate of bananas. In a moment somebody will say something frightening, obscene. There in the room is the ordinary fireplace. Unhook the brass trap and propped up inside is the woman's body, feet in the grate, head out of sight in the chimney. . . . Mr. Greene has a remarkable capacity for building up and sustaining a Dark Tower atmosphere. Every detail is significant. Icy wind from the north, rain freezing in the gutters, fog, winter streets, tram-lines, shops decorated for Christmas, squalidly respectable residential areas, the sidings of a big station at night—all seems saturated with the menace of flight and pursuit. And his interiors are no less disquieting.

> He opened the first door to hand and came into what was obviously the best bedroom; a wide double bed with a flowery eiderdown, veneered walnut furniture, a little embroidered bag for hair-combings, a tumbler of Lysol on the washstand for someone's false teeth. He opened the big wardrobe door and a musty smell of old clothes and camphor balls came out at him.

Mr. Greene's style is flowing, sensitive and dramatic, his dialogue pointed, the psychology convincing enough and yet somehow with an edge of distortion. Occasionally, where the dream thins out and we half wake to the world of Yard men, comic constables, skirts, tough guys, we begin to worry and question; but next moment we float off once more and regain our willing suspension of disbelief. The central figure, Raven, hare-lipped gunman, is the biggest worry: that is, in so far as Mr. Greene offers him to us as a serious criminological study. Regarded in a more external way, he is macabre and convincing enough; and in his last moments haunting in a way which has nothing to do with dreams and thrillers.

> Death came to him in the form of unbearable pain. It was as if he had to deliver this pain as a woman delivers a child, and he sobbed and moaned in the effort. At last it came out of him, and he followed his only child into a vast desolation.

One question: isn't it extremely uncommon for women to commit suicide by cutting their throats? One gnawing doubt: would they have *dared* risk paying a hired assassin with phoney notes when so much was at stake?

Last, not least, Mr. Sean O'Faolain's charming book *Bird Alone*. It is the reminiscences of an old man, a builder, native of Cork; romantic without sentimentality, rich and delicate at the same time. We see the country of youth spread out far away, diminished yet perfectly clear, a picture seen through the wrong end of a telescope, and arrested in a kind of mournful beauty: a May landscape caught by the accidental catastrophe of frost. Quotations would do imperfect justice to the quality of the prose with its lyrical weaving movement from start to finish, its soft Irish rhythm never overworked to the point of being (to the foreigner) irritating. Cork—the city and its waterways—is Mr. O'Faolain's background. It is obviously in his blood, and he conveys it to us with intensity. The characterisation is vivid, humorous, moving, the grandfather being perhaps the most successful. The only one that doesn't altogether convince me as a person moving independently in a freshly created world is Stella, the woman artist: possibly because, in my experience, painters, male or female, don't seem to talk like that about their painting.

The dialogue has a fresh, naturally dramatic flavour. Here is a fragment at random:

> Sure I knew you since I used to have to put a rubber apron on un to take you on my lap. And look *at* him. And he smooth, groomed, and placid. And look *at* me and me with my ponthers and my paraphernalia on in the presence of two aristocrats. Ye're noble. My dear children, be seated. I do forget my etiquette.

This capacity for really hearing, really listening in his head to his characters speaking, is a novelist's greatest and—I am inclined to think—rarest asset. Perhaps the Irish come by it easiest.

ROSAMOND LEHMANN

BEN JONSON

The Poems of Ben Jonson. Edited by BERNARD H. NEWDIGATE. *Blackwell.* 31s. 6d.

Ben Jonson (as Mr. T. S. Eliot has already pointed out, during the course of an admirable essay, published in *The Sacred Wood*) suffers at present from the most damning and derogatory reputation with which dead poet was ever afflicted. He is often cited but very seldom read. He has a large place in the histories of literature, but a very narrow place in the affections of the general reader for whom poetry, after all, is primarily written. He inspires respect; but he does not inspire interest; and the poet, like the lover, will always hope to arouse some emotion livelier than mere intellectual regard. In fact, the gifts with which Jonson subjugated his contemporaries are precisely those least easy to appreciate at the present day. An age that possessed more aspirants to classical learning than full-fledged classical scholars was amazed by the breadth and depth of his attainments; and the authority with which he wrote and spoke seemed doubly delightful since it was accompanied by overflowing personal humour. Nor must one forget that the period that exalted Jonson to the highest poetic rank was a period that still based its standards of classical excellence on the example of Seneca's tragedies, and that a certain weighty Latin ring, which reverberates through Jonson's dramatic verse, awoke an immediate response in the Elizabethan spirit. To appreciate the poet at his true value, one should perhaps begin by reading the famous *Conversations* with Drummond of Hawthorden; for here is a portrait of this "jovial black-bearded gentleman" executed in strong and simple colours—the picture of a poet and critic who impressed alike by the enormity of his girth and the range and fecundity of his intelligence, who had a capacity for quotation and literary anecdote only equalled by his capacity for food and wine.

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for his plays and masques. This edition is the most comprehensive yet attempted; but the general reader may find that Jonson is not a poet who benefits by being read in bulk, and that he prefers either the shorter lyrical pieces—as distinct from the elephantine *Elegies*—or the poems, often bordering on doggerel, in which he gives his Rabelaisian humour free rein. Such, for instance, are the brilliant *Picture Left in Scotland* and that remarkable essay in scatological fun, *The Voyage*, in which it is related how the poet and a friend—

> At *Bread-streets* Mermaid, having din'd, and merry,
> Propos'd to goe to Hol'borne in a wherry,

and how, while doing so, the two adventurous travellers were obliged to navigate the main sewer—exuberantly described—of that part of London. But even more entertaining is *The Good Wife's Ale*, which, although it often occurs in manuscripts, appears not to have been printed since 1641:

> When shall we meet agayne, and have a tast
> Of that transcendent Ale, we drank of last?
> What wild ingredients did the Woman choose
> To mad her drink with all; it made me loose
> My wits before it quencht my thirst, ther came
> Such whymseys in my head, and such a flame
> Of fyery drunkennesse had sing'd my nose,
> My beard shrunk in for fear. There were of those
> That took me for a commet; some a far
> Distance remote thought mee a blazing star.
> The Earth me thought just as it was it went
> Round in a wheeling course of merriment . . .
> My Mouth did stand awry just as it were
> Labring to whisper something in mine ear.
> My pockhold face, they say, appeared to some
> Most like a dry and burning hunniecombe . . .
> My guts were myres of sulphure, and my set
> Of parched teeth, strucke fire as they met.

Yet what may be called Jonson's official poetry also deserves attention. It is often dull; yet, at its best, it has a sonority and solidity that carries off a conventional and well-worn theme; and even when he was preparing a birthday poem in the year 1632 Jonson managed to strike out some uncommonly vigorous imagery:

> This is King Charles his Day. Speake it thou *Towre*
> Unto the *ships*, and they from *tier*, to *tier*,
> Discharge it 'bout the *Iland*, in an houre,
> As lowd as Thunder, and as swift as fire.
> Let *Ireland* meet it out at sea, halfe way,
> Repeating all great *Brittain's* joy, and more,
> Adding her owne glad accents, to this *Day*,
> Like *Eccho*, playing from the other shore.
> What *Drum's* or *Trumpets*, or great *Ord'nance* can,
> The *Poëtrie* of *steeples*, with the *Bells*,
> *Three Kingdomes* Mirth, in light, and aërie man,
> Made lighter with the Wine . . .

—thus proving that not all courtiers are bad poets, and that royal liberality sometimes falls on fruitful ground.

PETER QUENNELL

F. J. HARVEY DARTON

Alibi Pilgrimage. By F. J. HARVEY DARTON. *Newnes.* 10s. 6d.

"On the evening of Friday, December 29th, 1751, three wayfarers of singular appearance, stopped for rest and refreshment at the *Red Lion Inn*, South Perrott, Dorset." They were called Squires, Lucy and George, brother and sister, with their mother Mary, a hideous old gipsy with a huge underlip. How or why they appeared at South Perrott, is unknown, but their journeyings for the next few days became the most famous piece of evidence, manufactured or otherwise according to your taste, in eighteenth century criminal history. For these gipsies were involved in the Canning Case. While thirty-seven rustics of Dorset, Wilts and Hants swore that they had seen the gipsies journeying through Southern England towards London, twenty-six Londoners swore they had seen them in the neighbourhood of Enfield, where Susannah Wells, who was undoubtedly a friend of theirs, kept a brothel. The gipsies were accused of seizing Elizabeth Canning, a London maidservant, imprisoning her in the brothel and trying to force her to lead a life of prostitution. Mary Squires is said to have cut Elizabeth's stays—an offence punishable with death. Elizabeth Canning tottered in a fainting condition to her home in Aldermanbury, City, days later.

The gipsies were accused of the crime and produced an alibi pilgrimage which gives the title to Mr. Harvey Darton's book. Feeling ran as high about this crime as ever it did about the Lindbergh in our own century. The Lord Mayor, who was known to favour the case of the gipsies, was mobbed and the newly built Mansion House was stoned. Fielding, Allan Ramsay and Churchill took an interest in the case. Indeed, Fielding was deeply affected by the plight of Elizabeth Canning and exercised his influence on her behalf. Mary Squires was condemned to death and Susannah Wells was "burned in the hand."

Then the Lord Mayor, Sir Crisp Gascoyne, suddenly took up the cause of the gipsies. Despite disagreement in the jury, Mary Squires was acquitted on the strength of her alibi pilgrimage; the tables were turned and Elizabeth Canning, condemned to imprisonment and transportation for perjury, went to America.

Many people believed her wronged, and among them was Mr. Harvey Darton. But since his book is partly an essay in eighteenth century detection, it will be spoiling the fun to explain how he came to his conclusions.

Only the beginning and end of his book are concerned entirely with the Canning case. The middle and the larger part is devoted to the gipsies' journey from South Perrott, Dorset, to the brothel at Enfield Wash. They appear at odd moments across Toller Down, at the Abbotsbury Revels, to Portisham, Upwey and Dorchester, Winterbourne Abbas, Chettle, Martin, Coombe Bissett, and Stockbridge. Their route can be traversed on foot to-day with hardly a mile of tarmac road. All you have to do is to use a one-inch Ordnance Map and Mr. Harvey Darton's book. It would be difficult to think of a more sensible way of seeing some of the best country in England in quiet, full manner.

Mr. Harvey Darton died last Sunday from heart strain brought on, it is said, by too strenuous walking in his beloved Dorset. He has written four books of topographical description: *The Marches of Wessex* (1922: new edition just published); *A Parcel of Kent* (1924); *English Fabric* (1935); and the book under review. With these four he has shown himself easily the best modern topographical writer. Those meaningless adjectives, "picturesque," "old world," "ancient," "fine," used three or

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four times on a page by slapdash hacks with an undeserved popularity, were not used by Mr. Harvey Darton. He used his eyes, his ears, his nose, his scholarly knowledge of the past in every paragraph. He was full of humour and bitter satire. When he drank beer in a pub he was not a literary gentleman, when he wrote a glowing account of a view it was not a self-conscious purple patch, when he saw a town he did not go straight for the Norman Font in the Dec church, but comprehended the whole town, the Georgian overwhelming the mediaeval, the Victorian the Georgian, the bungaloid the Victorian.

Here are some phrases taken at random from *Alibi Pilgrimage*. Of ascending a coastal hill :

> But in front is a radiance between low, sharp-edged walls ; and the road line, to your right, seems to end there, as if there were an utter void beyond, a drop into bright nothingness. The firm earth has come to an end in a sea of light.

Of walking on downs at night :

> You will have only twinkling lights to guide you (the path hardly exists), and the feel beneath your soles of the difference between trodden and untrodden short turf ; one of the gentlest, subtlest differences in the world.

And by day :

> . . . a great dog fox came almost up to me, trotting with delicate silence in the dry thin grass.

Of those hard-won fields at the edge of the downs :

> where pasture is as it were a harried outpost.

Of ruined cottages :

> Their old wooden bones sticking up pitiably through rags of thatch and the crumbling flesh of mud plaster.

Of a stream in a Wiltshire valley :

> The sun laced it in fine meshes, and it might have been a shoal of sprats struggling in a seine cast from the shore and tugged, full to bursting, on to dry land.

Of village inn-frequenters :

> All Christian names to one another and casual mysteries to outsiders . . . confusedly inter-related.

Perhaps it is as well for Mr. Harvey Darton that he has died before the " spacious enclosed freedom " of his Dorset fields is all invaded, before all the signposts are " beetle-height," for road users who are too hurried and too lazy to read maps, before all his down land tracks are tarmacked, before " the wan sunflowers which the arrogance of a motoring association thrusts into the vision of the non-motoring majority " plaster every hamlet. His sensibility, observation and scholarship were worthy of those vestiges of England he has chronicled with affection and without sentimentality. JOHN BETJEMAN

THE MAKER OF THE I.L.O.

Yes and Albert Thomas. By E. J. PHELAN. *Cresset Press.* 10s. 6d.

Anyone who knew Albert Thomas personally is bound to have a keen recollection of the forcefulness of his personality. My own most vivid recollection of him goes back to our first meeting at the Webbs' house in Grosvenor Road, when Thomas was French Minister of Munitions, and we had a long talk about the Labour problems arising out of dilution here and in France. Then, as always, Albert Thomas showed a quite extraordinary grasp of detail ; and I got afterwards to know how prodigious a memory he possessed. He was a man who was able to keep track of all the complexities of a huge organisation and at the same time to retain a convincing grasp of the essentials and a firm leadership over his colleagues, who were generally devoted to him.

Mr. Phelan, the author of this book, is certainly to be numbered among the devotees. Mr. Phelan was on the staff of the I.L.O. from the very beginning ; indeed he was connected with the preliminary organisation before Thomas was appointed director, and thereafter he remained as Thomas' colleague to the end. Not the least interesting part of Mr. Phelan's book is his account of the shock administered to him as a highly trained British Civil Servant by his first contact with Thomas' very different methods of office organisation. This part of the book gives an extraordinarily vivid impression of the difficulties involved in building up an international Civil Service among men of different nationalities trained in widely differing administrative traditions, and therewith of the importance of having at the head of such an experiment a man of really forceful personality and wide grasp. Mr. Phelan is also very interesting when he tells the story of Thomas' appointment as Director of the I.L.O., against the wish of the British Government and indeed of most of the Government's delegates. Thomas was brought forward as the nominee of the workers' and employers' delegations jointly ; and his appointment was the first successful vindication of the claim that the I.L.O. was to be, not a mere piece of inter-governmental machinery, but an independent organisation representing the industrial movements of the various countries as well as the States.

That throughout was essentially Thomas' view of the I.L.O. ; and Mr. Phelan tells excellently the tale of his successful building up of its independence and power against numerous opponents. Undoubtedly, the I.L.O. owes a very great deal to Thomas' vigorous and combative leadership in its early days. Perhaps the League of Nations owes something to him too ; for Thomas' action in firmly planting the I.L.O. down at Geneva in face of an intrigue then proceeding among the Allied Governments to place the seat of the League itself at Brussels, despite the terms of the Peace Treaty, was probably effective in squashing the intrigue—just as the I.L.O.'s prompt admission of the Germans to membership prepared the way for their return to the League at a later stage. Thomas from the first conceived of the I.L.O. as a real international organ, and not as either an inter-Allied appendage to the Treaty of Versailles or a federation of Governments for negotiating with one another about labour conditions. He wanted the initiative in it to rest with the workers' organisations ; and in the face of many difficulties he succeeded to a remarkable extent. Mr. Phelan's intimate contact with Albert Thomas enables him to give a very vivid account of Thomas' part in this work of construction. The book is not a biography, but an intimate personal portrait which deserves to be studied not only by those who are interested in the I.L.O., but by all students of the difficult problems of international organisation.

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Mr. Ellery Queen has departed from the hitherto uniform nomenclature of his novels (the *Dutch Shoe*, the *Roman Hat*, the *Spanish Cape*, etc.) and calls his tenth and latest detective story *Half Way House*. Was it conceivable that one of our most consistent writers intended either to change his methods or swop his detective in mid-stream ? Conceivable, yes ; but highly improbable that anyone who has amalgamated his personality with his detective and matured his style should suddenly abandon both for any novelty. The other more likely conclusion was that Mr. Queen intends to write exactly ten more detective stories and then stop ; and this guess is confirmed after reading the book, which might easily have been called " The Swedish Match Mystery " had Mr. Queen been so minded, for all the difference between it and its predecessors. Nevertheless, the art of the detective story, leaving Mr. Queen to reel off his ten more self-appointed laps, may indeed have reached its grand climacteric in July, 1936, with the appearance of *Murder Off Miami*.

This portentous innovation is not a cloth-bound book at all, but a congeries of typescript, photographs, facsimiles of documents, and miscellaneous objects, held together by red ribbon and enclosed in a manila paper folder. It is extremely doubtful whether it will be obtainable from any library as it would be a misnomer to call it a book. If the experiment proves a success we shall have to invent a special name for such productions, like crime-packet or clue-bundle. And I, personally, wish the experiment every success in its daring assault against the shelves of booksellers (it is of an intractable size and likely to collect dust), the purses of library subscribers and reviewers (it will have to be bought and can't be sold), the jealousy of authors (it necessitates a probity of plot and an absence of padding which they won't appreciate),

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the malevolence of club bores and the general perversity of mankind. The intention of the authors of this new-fangled idea is to present the reader with the *dossier* of a crime committed on a yacht off the coast of Florida. The *dossier* is collected on board the yacht by a squad of detectives and despatched to Police Headquarters, Miami. The reader is in the same position as Lieutenant Schwab at Police Headquarters, who is able on the evidence submitted to order an arrest. The reader is challenged to do the same before breaking the flap which conceals Lieutenant Schwab's final deductions. The fact that it is almost impossible not to reach the same conclusion as the Lieutenant will not detract from anyone's whole-hearted enjoyment of the mystery.

This method of presenting detective fiction has, as I see it, two absolute advantages compared with the 7*s.* 6*d.* novel of at least 250 printed pages with perhaps a couple of plans of the shrubbery and the North Wing of the Manse thrown in. Brevity: the old novel is almost invariably too long for the essentials of its plot; consequently either fantastical complications or love interests, descriptions of Nature and disquisitions on wine and aesthetics are required to bulk it out to the satisfaction of the publisher and the irritation of the public. Vividness: between photographs of the protagonists and detailed word descriptions of them there is the same difference as between the talkies and the silent film with captions. *Murder Off Miami* is bound to inaugurate a new era in detection, but it sets a very high standard of skill. In a straight plot without trimmings there is always the chronic difficulty of obscuring the villain, and in this direction *Murder Off Miami* cannot be said to succeed. It *should* be possible, and with further practice I trust that Messrs. Wheatley and Links will manage it. I suggest that to do so they rely still more on photographs for bemusing the reader, as few people can scrutinise the details of a photograph as closely as they do handwriting or print. Meanwhile I heartily congratulate all concerned in this new venture on their intelligence and enterprise.

The President's Mystery Story is a farrago of ballyhoo. President Roosevelt is supposed to contribute the plot and the six distinguished American writers furnish the solution, each writing a chapter in turn. The plot, which the President is unable to solve himself, is "How can a man disappear with five million dollars in any negotiable form and not be traced?" I suppose the President was too busy with politics and detective stories to hear about the Portuguese banknote case where this was done; and in that instance it was not even the gentleman's own money he got away with: to this day, in fact, nobody quite knows whose money it was. At any rate, given an elementary plot which any one of them could have tackled single-handed, these six American authors have concocted in collaboration a sentimental love story with a high-minded millionaire for hero. His object in disappearing is to save his money from a grasping Russian wife in order to found a University of Sports and Sportsmanship! This plurality of authors lands the hero in a horrid mess after a lot of facial surgery, and in the end, so keen are they all on the love interest, that to preserve a happy ending the hero is forced to reappear with the cash. So the President can preen himself on the evidence that his insoluble plot is still unsolved.

Half Way House, to which I have already referred, is not as neat as the early Queens. There is in particular one untidy passage that would be amateurishly culpable if it were not that one finds it hard to believe that an old hand would give away his villain so carelessly. Mr. Queen continues to issue challenges to his readers—not to *guess* right; because he regards guessing as unfair, but to deduce the criminal by logic. If you apply your logic not to the details of the crime, which are meagre and yet confusing, but to Mr. Queen's character, you will reach the correct result by a short cut, although Mr. Queen deliberately gives you a fright before your judgment is confirmed. I hope Ellery will stop at *Half Way House* until he is thoroughly refreshed for the rest of the course.

Last Will and Testament is the sequel to *Dr. Tancred Begins*. There is another crime for Dr. Tancred to solve, but we are familiar with the criminal from the start, the only mystery lying in the method of perpetration. I can't see what is the point of such a book. The authors themselves cannot decide whether to assume their readers have read the earlier volume or to pretend they have not. Could the Coles possibly be persuaded to join Mr. Queen for a long drink at Half Way House?

Mr. Teilhet is the American author of *The Talking Sparrow Murders*, which was a most exciting story about Nazis in Germany without being very profound. *The Ticking Terror Murders* has a touch of excitement here and there and can be recommended for light reading. Mr. Teilhet has invented a comic Austrian detective, the Baron Von Katz, to solve the murdering of a film actress in California. As a sample of his fast work—the Baron is knocked out by an antagonist in a garret and comes round from his unconsciousness two days later to find himself in bed with a red-headed girl.

Murder on Mitcham Common is unenterprising, second-rate stuff, with the guilty party very prominent throughout.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

SHORTER NOTICES

The Making of Modern Iraq. By HENRY A. FOSTER. *Williams and Norgate.* 15*s.*

On October 30th, 1918, the Allied Powers signed the Armistice with Turkey. On the following day British troops moved into Mosul to establish the British claim to the oilfields; at the same time French agents began working for the annexation of Syria. Secret treaties had been signed for the division of the Turkish spoils and hasty preparations were made for the betrayal of the fulsome promises of independence made during the war to the Arabs. The Arabs, however, had not fought merely for a change in masters and it required all the machinery of Western warfare to bomb them into submission. Moreover, Franco-British jealousies had only been temporarily submerged and the final defeat of Germany brought them once again to the surface. The British taxpayer was war-weary and he was not very willing to spend more millions in crushing the spirit of self-determination to which lip-service had been paid at Versailles. America was also interested in oil and she was not ready to see exclusive control slip into the hands of France and Great Britain. These are some of the forces which played their part in the exciting story of the making of modern Iraq, and which enabled her some years later to attain the status of an independent nation. The author of this book sees the main conflict as being between the old imperialist method and the new mandatory ideal of the League, championed by America. In actual fact, Iraq probably owes her independence to the tenacity of Arab resistance and the deep-rooted character of Anglo-French and Anglo-American antagonisms.

Man Makes Himself. By V. GORDON CHILDE. *Watts.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

In this swift but comprehensive summary of man's story, as compiled laboriously and disinterestedly by the archæologist and prehistorian, Professor Childe has given the general reader a lesson in pure history that will enable him to check the assumptions of those who, misled by the historians of salient "periods" and "epochs" of the past three thousand years, with their biased and tendentious records of personalities and policies and of the rise and fall of states and empires, talk glibly of race and progress without defining their terms. At the dawn of written history all the major discoveries that gave man potential dominance over his environment had been made. Professor Childe's story of the immensely old palæolithic culture and of the comparatively brief neolithic culture that ushered in the great urban cultures of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Indus valley throws curious lights on the follies and disasters of Imperialism and Nationalism, without in any way detracting from their peculiar achievements. Here is a book that should send many of its readers to the study of the records upon which it is founded and to the books, mentioned in the Professor's bibliography, in which those records and their interpretations are to be found.

We regret that in our review of *Sacrifice to Attis* last week the name of the author, Mr. William A. Brend, was given as Brand.

Week-end Competitions

No. 333

Set by T. W. Earp

On the model of such a line as "A Mr. Wilkinson, a clergyman," or "From the pale forehead to the jet-black shoe," the usual prizes are offered for the best and second-best sonnet, of the most exemplary flatness, on the virtues of aspirin, an unsuccessful attempt to swim the Channel, or a favourite film-star.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, August 7th.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize

THE charge for classified advertisements is One Shilling and Sixpence per line per insertion (a line averages seven words). One line should be added for Box Number. Substantial reduction for a series of insertions. Copy first post Wednesday. The Advert. Manager, N.S. & N., 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1. (Hol. 3216.)

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or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 331

Set by E. B. C. Jones

It must be nearly ten years since Mr. R. E. Davidson, writing in this paper of the buying and driving-in of new cars, described them as often being delivered at top speed by a "filthy stripling." This phrase was gratefully adopted by at least one reader and has since been used, in a tolerant rather than an enraged tone, to designate all junior employees of garages. This branch of private slang must be as fruity as others. My own most useful phrases for describing people are: *Seven-months child* for an adult of either sex who is squidgy and undergrown without being deformed; *Frog Child* for a child whose self-consciousness takes an active form, such as leaping about; *Virgin Wife* and *Conquering Blonde* which need no explanation, and *Prematurely Grey*, used only of men, which, while being the most valuable of the lot, it is impossible to explain briefly.

We offer a first prize of Two Guineas and a second prize of Half a Guinea for the best set of four such expressions—i.e., phrases applicable to *persons*—with comments; the whole not to exceed one hundred words.

Report by E. B. C. Jones

There was a large entry for this competition, and, of course, in a large number of the entries the comments were written in a facetious style. Fortunately, none of these scored bull's-eyes. There were many bull's-eyes, but, as I expected, seldom more than one in a given four. With two exceptions everybody understood my intention. One of these disdained to append comments to his phrases, holding that their meaning should be self-evident, unaware that some of the best slang provides a short cut, where otherwise a long sentence would have to be used. On this ground, Frank Singleton, a runner-up, fell out; two of his four are seven-word phrases: *A black-velvet and marble-arms woman* and the brilliant *A Man with a light-complexioned voice*, "which expresses also that exhausting mildness of character." The same competitor gives us the useful *C.B.* for the cultivated bachelor who becomes more so as he grows older. The other competitor who misunderstood my requirements was Guy Innes; after saying that "the best extant in this kind are unprintable," which *may* be so, he refers me to an out-of-print slang dictionary. But I am interested in current usage, and in slang which has arisen spontaneously from the need of small circles of people with the same tastes and values.

On the principle of looking for oneself in the photographic group, I was particularly pleased to find two of my own pets: *Lossiemouth* for any Ramsay MacDonald, and *Egg-bound*, applied to someone who can't get on with it. I looked in vain for a word denoting the week-end cyclist who bends double over the handlebars, oddly dressed, and whom I call *Morlock* (cf. *The Time Machine*). Indeed, developments of recent years—wireless and flying, for instance—are untouched; emphasis lies on personal relations and idiosyncrasies. Apart from the winners, the best list of four, none of which occurred in the same paper, is as follows:

Well-woman (abbrev. "Well," or "Well, well, well!"): A woman whose habits or appearance are masculine. (Elizabeth.)

Boffins: Hopelessly obtuse, amiable fatheads, generally relations. (H. Perry.)

Poperinghe Priest: Ecclesiastic addicted to comradeship and, of course, Toc H. (T. H.)

Cut Glass: for a person who speaks with an ultra-refined accent. (M. We.t.)

Others which made me laugh were *Battered Caravanserai* for any middle-aged lady devoted to the arts—her proper habitat is a caravan; *Wagnerian*, one who sweats when emotional; *Cloaca Maxima*, a filthy-minded person; *Orange-sucker*, a woman whose boredom during love-making necessitates simultaneous occupation; *God's Little Brother*, a pompous person; *Poor Little Me*, for the girl who thus draws attention to herself; *Café Squirrel*, one who droops in cafés over coffee and conversation, and *Sacred*, used of parsons with too holy a manner. Best of the many expressions betraying Thurber feeling was *Sousewife*, a woman who, having flooded her own home, slops over into other people's.

I hesitated much between the two winners, but on the whole, Manica gets it. Her number one is longer than I like, but it is nice to have a fresh version of Jack-in-office. Her third is rather obvious, but her second is charming, and her fourth, which some entrants will consider too literary, is my idea of good private slang, and, furthermore, is an excellent remplacant for my own clumsy *Descended from the Kings of Ireland*. As regards Leo's list, his, or more probably her, number one, which overlaps with *Boffins* already quoted, will be very useful, and is perhaps particularly sympathetic to me because it recalls the well-tried phrase *Armenian Atrocities* for decorative objects brought back by travellers in the Balkan provinces. Her second and delightful third compensate for the slight boredom evoked by her fourth.

FIRST PRIZE

The Lord Lieutenant's Pantryboy. Dates from the occasion of a country flower-show, when a local magnate dressed up the junior male members of his household staff and set them to controlling the traffic. Hence, any officious person in uniform.

Queen B. Self-explanatory when it is realised that B stands for Bitch. Useful, because can be uttered aloud in a complimentary tone.

Father of Five. Origin: signed letters to the press. A loquacious person with a grievance.

Honour'd Margaret. Origin: Milton's sonnet. A person who boasts obliquely of ancestry. Applicable to either sex. MANICA

SECOND PRIZE

An Armenian. A person, usually a well-meaning fool, whom it is almost impossible not to snub and put upon.

Aunt Emily. A person who asks you to do what you were obviously just on the point of doing.

Sunday Youths. Groups of boys and young men, who stand about at street corners in villages and small towns, with apparently nothing to do.

A Wendy. A woman who treats her men as children to be spoilt and humoured. LEO

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 188.—TEAPOTS

". . . So the dormouse was put into the teapot," said Betty.

"*I'll* show you something funny about a teapot," said the Professor, coming suddenly to life. "Look at this:

```
  B A L L
    B A T
-----------
T E A P O T
-----------
```

"You multiply BALL by BAT and TEAPOT is the answer."

"I don't understand," said Betty. ("And the Professor," she was thinking, "looks dreadfully like a dormouse himself.")

"I do," said Jean. "It's one of those things where each letter represents a figure."

"That's right," said the Professor. "See if you can turn it into figures."

See if YOU *can.*

PROBLEM 186.—EGBERT'S EXCURSION

Egbert (as a record number of solvers have discovered) walked 10½ miles.

I expected—and got—criticism for including this problem in the series. "Childish," wrote several solvers contemptuously.

These people should have a heart. A little algebra gives pleasure now and again, as my correspondence testifies. Besides, some of my critics are not so hot themselves, as is shown by their struggles with Problem 184.

PROBLEM 184.—THE THREE GROUP CIPHER

The first group of three figures is:

a	*b*
15218 05609	31479

This is what happens to it:

a	*b*	*a*/*b*	Letter
15	3	5	E
21	1	21	U
80	4	20	T
56	7	8	H
09	9	1	A

and so on, throughout the cipher. The complete message is:

EUTHANASIAN BATTLESHIPS CONCENTRATING.

PROBLEM 185.—At Spaghetti's

A set of Low's Cartoons goes to: J. L. Nicholson, 253 Cromwell Road, S.W.5.

Seven points are awarded.

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

In addition, a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points a solver is entitled to a prize consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10*s*. Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150. Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope; but on separate sheets of paper.

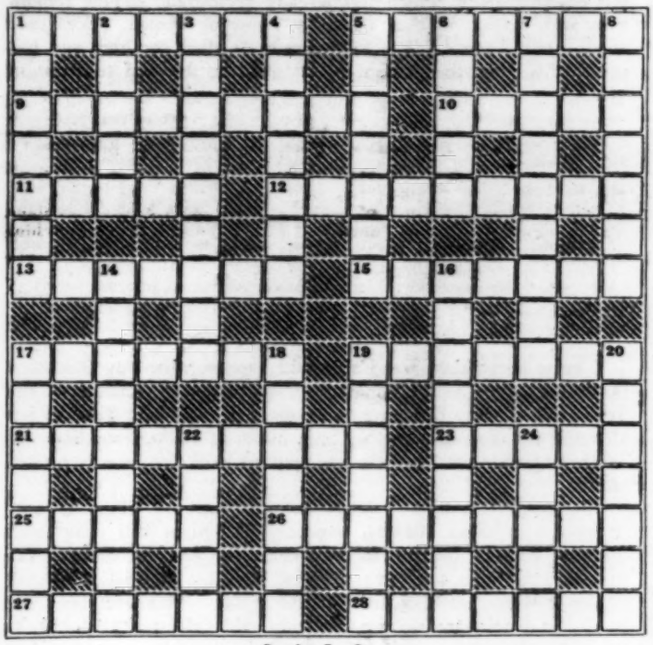
Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

[U.S.A. Competitors. The Editor regrets that the prizes offered in our Week-end Competitions cannot apply to American competitors.]

CALIBAN

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 334

The sender of the first correct solution to be opened may choose as prize a copy of either *This England* or *The Playtime Omnibus*. Envelopes should be addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1, and must arrive not later than first post next Wednesday. Prize-winners should address their claims to the Editor.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
Mr. D. J. Mallagh, 92 Kidbrook Park Road, S.E.3.

ACROSS.

1. As farce they hold water.
5. Swarm round Timothy.
9. Noticeably dangerous officer.
10. Andrews must be struck off the Roll of Writers to the Signet for this.
11. Suitable prize for testing matches.
12. A winner of unsuitable tricks.
13. The outside edge.
15. A needlewoman.
17. And in the backwash a tool appears.
19. Leaves off work and goes to bed.
21. A famous surgeon in bed.
23. It would give one a fright to make such a mistake after tea.
25. Washout legally.
26. She presumably doesn't wear even a pigtail.
27. Such things would antidote forget-me-nots.
28. Signs of percussive sound.

DOWN.

1. The A.P.M. goes up in the middle to observe likenesses.
2. Chief Prince in the Empire.
3. When these woodmen are free they are friendly people.
4. Dead heat in footwear competition?
5. Black cat would be a corrective.
6. She evidently walks on the water.
7. Did he put lunatics into top gear?
8. Stout would not be suitable for a shallow cousin.
14. Separates opposing sides at Court.
16. One must be to keep up fashionably in the water.
17. One does not hang the kettle on it to boil.
18. A jobber of course.
19. Tracks for horsemen in Yorkshire.
20. They have bows on at concerts.
22. Adds y to n phonetically in Spain.
24. A tragic Montague.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

D	O	O	R	S	T	E	P	■	E	S	C	A	R	P
E	■	V	■	P	■	L	■	■	O	■	R	■	R	
P	R	E	P	A	R	E	■	F	A	N	F	A	R	E
O	■	R	■	R	■	V	■	U	■	A	■	M	■	V
S	E	A	T	T	L	E	■	R	U	N	D	A	L	E
E	■	L	■	A	■	N	■	N	■	C	■	I	■	N
■	■	L	O	N	G	H	A	I	R	E	D	C	A	T
I	■	■	■	U	■	S	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	S
C	O	U	N	T	I	N	G	H	O	U	S	E	■	■
E	■	P	■	O	■	D	E	■	N	■	N	■	B	
C	O	R	O	N	E	R	■	D	R	E	D	G	E	R
R	■	I	■	N	■	E	■	R	■	Q	■	R	■	E
E	N	G	L	A	N	D	■	O	C	U	L	A	T	E
A	■	H	■	C	■	■	O	■	A	■	F	■	Z	
M	I	T	T	E	N	■	O	M	E	L	E	T	T	E

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By TOREADOR

ARMS AND TAXATION—BANK'S GOLD POLICY AND THE GILT-EDGED MARKET—PERAK RIVER AND TIN—MONTAGUE BURTON

Is the Chancellor of the Exchequer a man of moods, or are his advisers at the Treasury as changeable as weathercocks? On July 3rd Mr. Neville Chamberlain warned the House of Commons that it was practically certain that there would be a deficit on the Budget. As it is unusual for Chancellors to make gloomy prognostications when only three months of the financial year have passed it was inferred that the deficit would be huge. The Supplementary Estimates for armaments had already exceeded the Budget provision for extra defence by £34½ millions. Was it to be another 6*d.* on the income tax? This was the question continually being asked in the City some weeks ago. But on July 23rd Mr. Chamberlain informed a mass meeting at Chudleigh that he was hopeful that they (Chudleigh) had seen the worst of taxation. The defence programme was to be a costly process, he said, but the national finances had so improved in the last few years that new taxation was only a fraction of the increased expenditure on armaments. "Our revenue," he added, "has proved to be so buoyant that I have only had to ask the taxpayers for £15½ millions." Had Mr. Chamberlain forgotten what he said on July 3rd when he was apologising for Supplementary Estimates which had already upset his Budget by £34½ millions? The two statements are only capable of one explanation—that Mr. Chamberlain has decided to meet this year's larger deficit on rearmament by raising a defence loan. If we are to treble the Air Force, increase the Army and build an entirely new Navy over a period of years, it would surely be sound finance to have a short-dated defence loan—carrying low interest and a heavy sinking fund. Personally, I am betting on its issue before the end of this financial year.

* * *

If a defence loan has been decided on, the gilt-edged market need have no qualms: it will be supported by the Treasury and "dressed up" for the occasion. I do not suggest that official support has already been extended. The recent strength of the gilt-edged market has followed, I think, upon a proper appreciation of Bank of England policy. Two months ago there were genuine fears of a credit stringency. Bankers' deposits at the Bank of England had fallen sharply and the banks' cash ratios had been almost dangerously reduced. If the Bank of England refused to increase the supply of bank cash (by buying Government securities) how, it was asked, could the joint stock banks go on increasing advances without being obliged to sell investments? The recent heavy gold purchases by the Bank of England, and the half-yearly statements of the joint stock banks, have dispelled these fears. It is now realised that the root of the credit stringency was the influx of French funds, and that the Bank of England is alert and prepared to take appropriate measures to offset this nuisance. It is worth while keeping the technique in mind. When French capital takes flight—buying sterling against francs—the Exchange Equalisation Fund acquires the francs and exchanges them for gold. To pay for the gold the E.E.F. issues Treasury Bills, which are taken up by the banks and the discount market. As the banks receive no addition to their cash in this operation, their cash ratios are reduced—unless the runaway French purchase securities from them. If, however, the runaway French do not purchase securities from the banks, but actually demand British currency for hoarding, then the banks' cash is reduced and the contraction in their cash ratio becomes severe. At the end of May last their cash ratio had actually fallen to 10.1 per cent.

* * *

It was to meet this threat to easy money that the Bank of England began buying gold from the Exchange Equalisation Account. Since the end of May last it has purchased about £30 millions gold at the old parity of 85*s.* per ounce. These gold purchases plus its purchases of Government securities have more than balanced the £27 millions increase in the note circulation. We do not have to ask whether the Government still believes in cheap money. The policy of cheap money has been successfully demonstrated this year. I never could believe in the necessity of dearer money while the Treasury maintained an intelligent control of our insulated money system. The real threat to the gilt-edged market will come when, under the stimulus of the rearmament spending, prices and wages have risen sufficiently to make the authorities feel nervous about an inflation. Then Bank rate may be raised and the gilt-edged market left to its own devices. But I do not anticipate this spot of trouble before 1937. In the meantime the gilt-edged market, which has already recovered, should remain firm and, saving political alarms at home or abroad, prices may show a rising trend. The following table gives the high and low prices this year, the present prices and the flat and redemption yields:—

	1936.		Present	Gross Yield %.	
	High.	Low.	Price.	Flat.	Redemption.*
2½% Consols ...	87⅛	83⅛	85⅛	£2 18 9	—
3% Locals ...	97	94⅜	96⅜	£3 2 3	—
3½% War Loan ...	107⅛	104⅝	106¼	£3 5 9	£2 18 0 (if 1952)
3½% Conversion ...	108⅛	104⅛	108	£3 5 6	£3 0 0 (if 1961)
4% Consols ...	115¼	113⅜	114 11/32 xd.	£3 9 6	£2 16 6 (if 1957)
4% Funding ...	119	116⅛	117 ⅛	£3 8 3	£2 16 0 (if 1960)
3% Funding ...	104⅛	102	103 ⅞	£2 18 6	£2 16 0 (if 1959)
2½% Funding ...	96⅛	93⅛	93⅛	£2 13 9	£3 0 0 (if 1961)

* Gross equivalent of net redemption yield with tax at 4*s.* 9*d.*

* * *

I knew something dreadful would happen when my Statistical Assistant began to recommend tin shares. His betting on the restriction scheme being renewed obviously stiffened Siam in her demand for the unreasonably high quota of 18,000 tons (she was offered 15,000 tons), and the negotiations have temporarily broken down.

Statistical Assistant: What do you expect? This is only Round 2 in these Oriental negotiations. Siam will come back because without the restriction scheme the price of tin may fall below £100 per ton. But I have another suggestion—Perak River Hydro-Electric ordinary shares at 28*s.* This electrical share is almost a tin share, since 90 per cent. of its electricity sales are to Malayan tin mining companies, but it is a tin share which is not dependent on the price of tin or on the restriction scheme. Its prosperity depends on the physical volume of tin produced, like that of the tin smelter. Indeed, it might benefit from a collapse of the tin restriction scheme because the volume of Malayan production would undoubtedly rise. Most Malayan producers are low-cost producers, and as Bolivia apparently cannot produce her allotted quota Malaya would undoubtedly win in the unrestricted race for output. To return to Perak River Hydro-Electric, earnings in the year to June, 1935, were only 3 per cent., but for the year to June, 1936, I am looking for earnings of about 12 per cent. On the basis of the current tin quota of 90 per cent. I would be surprised if earnings are much less than 15 per cent., and having regard to the increase in tin consumption—resulting from the recovery in America and the rearmament expenditures, not to mention the potential demand for bully-beef tins—the quota is not likely to fall below 90 per cent. At 28*s.* the shares return an estimated earnings yield of 8.6 per cent.

Toreador: I agree that the shares look attractive, but I still cannot understand why you do not recommend British Tin Investment at 12*s.* 6*d.* to yield nearly 7 per cent. on last year's dividends, with the prospect of a yield of 8 per cent. this year if dividends are increased from 8½ to 10 per cent. (The interim dividend has been increased from 2½ per cent. to 3 per cent.). The break-up value is probably around 14*s.* British Tin Investment, in my view, is the safest and probably the cheapest way of acquiring an interest in the tin mining and smelting industry.

Stop Press: Siam has agreed to tin restriction in principle and the quota negotiations (Round 3) are to be resumed. But not this argument with my Statistical Assistant.

* * *

The 4¼ per cent. first mortgage debenture stockholders of Montague Burton may feel a little anxious about the issue this week of 4 per cent. debenture stock and 5 per cent. preference shares by Montague Burton Shop Properties, Ltd. When the £3,000,000 4¼ per cent. debenture stock of Montague Burton was issued in 1935 it was specifically charged on £4,538,059 of freehold and leasehold shops and received a floating charge upon the remaining assets, including shop properties valued at £2,109,000. If Montague Burton is free to sell to M.B. Shop Properties, Ltd., the properties it has not specifically charged—it has so far sold £750,000 worth—the security behind Montague Burton 4¼ per cent. debenture stock will obviously be weakened. So far it has not been dangerously weakened, but it will be soon time to call a halt.

Company Meeting

FURNESS, WITHY & CO., LTD.

The Forty-fifth Annual General Meeting of Furness, Withy and Co., Ltd., was held on July 28th at Furness House, Leadenhall Street, E.C. The Lord Essendon, who presided, said (in part) that the improvement in the net result of £415,310—an increase of about £20,000—would have been even more marked but for heavily increased costs due to labour conditions, wages, and fuel oil.

Whilst it was a source of strength to the company that its interests were so widespread, it was equally true that their problems were multiplied for the same reason. The board had in the past endeavoured to secure a participation in such trade expansions as they considered most probable, as, for example, the acquisition of the Prince Line, which gave them a participation in several United States trades at a time when the overseas trade of the United States was rapidly developing. They had also acquired the balance of the share capital of Shaw Savill and Albion in order to secure a very definite participation in an Empire trade of the first importance—between the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa. Since they last met a fresh trade agreement with the Argentine was being negotiated. As to the United States, where they had many interests, by the latest subsidy regulations, American shipowners engaged in overseas trade would be entitled to Government assistance in regard to both construction and operation of their ships.

Dealing with the general position of shipping, the Chairman said that the remedy he had proposed some four years ago of a voluntary laying up agreement had not been considered universally practicable. A subsequent proposal for a contributory laying up agreement had not received the necessary support. The Scrap and Build Scheme was of greater benefit to the shipbuilding than to the shipowning industry.

The whole country must have been gratified to hear the recent survey of British trade made by the President of the Board of Trade in the House of Commons. Those who had read the speech would have noted that the improvement which he reported was largely confined to home markets, and he admitted that the recovery had been slow in the export trades. It was the export trade, or rather the overseas trade, which, of course, included imports, which particularly affected the shipping industry. Reference was made to the gratifying recovery in the shipbuilding industry, but he looked in vain for any reference to shipowning. One pleasing feature, however, was the President's statement that the decline in international trade appeared to have been arrested at last. The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.

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